FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk September 28, 2014

Mid Edition No 627

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Why we need clarity on the immigration debate

IMMIGRATION is an issue which tends to polarise people.

There are those who believe our borders are out of control and that we risk being over-run. That Britain is being fractured as a consequence.

Then there are those who believe the cultural blend migration has introduced to the UK is what makes us a special nation and we should open our arms to one and all.

The reality, of course, lies somewhere in between.

It *is* a problem in this country - and no political party should consider itself too 'right on' not to acknowledge that. But no political party should try and put the ills of this nation on the shoulders of those who move here from abroad, either.

The problem is that the whole debate is so bogged down by claims and counter-claims of racism that those sides polarise even more towards the view they most align themselves to. And so we go back to the start.

Healthy, open, honest debate is needed. The ability to differentiate between illegal immigrants and asylum seekers needs to be clearly spelt out to the population.

The identical issue of a working family from Australia moving here compared to one from Poland or Iraq needs to be underlined. But, most importantly, we need to agree that Britain is great for its tolerance - of cultures and beliefs and of people.

Yet it is great too for its identity as a Western nation; rich in history and with a proud past where only class, not religion or ethnicity has divided us for generations. Because we have a clear British culture which is defined by each and every one of us buying into it whether we were born here or not. Only by agreeing that can we move forward together as one society.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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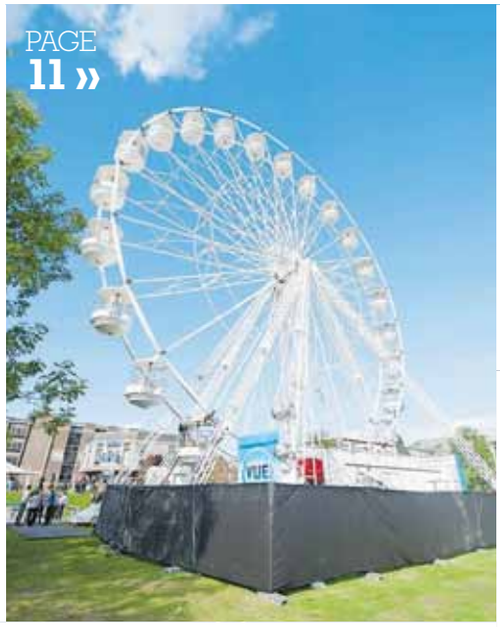

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Drugs, weapons, alcohol and too few staff at jail

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

REPORT: Watchdog finds host of failings at Sheppey prison - most of which could be solved by more staff

PRISONERS too frightened to come out of their cells and the availability of drugs, alcohol and weapons were the key concerns after a report issued on Friday into HMP Swaleside.

Although there were a number of positive aspects of the report, into the category B jail on Sheppey which houses a little over 1,100 men, the findings of the visit earlier this year will be of major concern.

The report was conducted by the watchdog, the HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

It highlighted too few staff, which meant many inmates were left locked in their cells for long periods of time.

The report said: "Although most prisoners reported feeling safe and the prison felt calm, there were some concerning contra-indications. The violence reduction policy was not adequately implemented, which may have been a reflection of staff shortages.

"Required mandatory drug testing had not been carried out by the prison and staff therefore had no accurate idea about the availability of drugs.

"Almost a third of prisoners told us it was easy to get drugs, which was similar to comparable prisons, but significantly more prisoners than elsewhere told us it was easy to get alcohol. There had also been number of serious assaults on prisoners and staff.

"Prisoners told us they were worried about the availability of weapons. We found prisoners scattered throughout the prison who were frightened to come out of their cells."

Nick Hardwick, chief inspector of prisons, said: "Some of our concerns about HMP Swaleside can, and should, be addressed by the prison itself. As a training prison it needs to create a better work ethic. Offender management services need to be better and more safely organised.

"Frightened prisoners need to be identified and supported and the violence reduction policy rigorously implemented."

Andrew Neilson, director of campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "This is the latest in a long line of damning inspection reports showing prisons stretched beyond their limits.

"Mnisters deny there is a crisis, but the evidence is plain to see.

"Staff cuts have made Swaleside a dangerous prison. It is dangerous for prisoners and for staff, and that means it is dangerous for the public too, as men spill out back into communities."

Vince Cable blunder as he claims Southend Airport is in the county

BUSINESS secretary Vince Cable was left red-faced after a flying visit to the county saw him claim Southend Airport was in Kent.

The senior Coalition figure was here to make a visit to Dungeness nuclear power station to launch a new employment drive, and then to one of the UK's top creative dance companies, based in Ashford.

And it was there he slipped up - confusing us with near neighbour Essex.

Speaking to reporters at the Jasmin Vardimon Company in Ashford, including KoS, he was asked about his reaction to the sale of Manston Airport to developers (for full details of the estimated £24m deal and its implications - turn to page 9).

That news broke just hours before he arrived in the county for the visit on Tuesday.

The Liberal Democrat said: "I don't think it's my job to take sides; it depends what the local community's preferences are.

"The development I heard about this morning seemed positive – a mixture of manufacturing and housing but I can see why people want to keep it as an airport.

"You have two small airports already, Lydd and Southend, both of which are expanding but it's really up to local people, though it is good news that someone wants the site, and that's the positive side of it."

Southend's shift south of the Thames will come as a surprise to many.

Speaking about his visit to Dungeness, on the Romney Marsh, earlier in the day, he explained: "We were launching a big new training programme in partnership with the nuclear industry because we're in need of getting a new generation involved in the nuclear power industry."

He then visited a medical design firm before heading back to Westminster.

For a special report on safety at Dungeness power station, turn inside this week's edition.

Royal approval for memorial garden renovation project

THE Duke of Kent unveiled a commemorative stone in Tonbridge this week, as the town's refurbished memorial gardens were re-dedicated.

Amid concerns over the deteriorating condition of the memorial site, more than £250,000 was spent boosting the area.

Group Captain Patrick Tootal, chairman of the Tonbridge Memorial Gardens Trust, said: ''This has been a remarkably successful community project and I am delighted that it has come to fruition.''

To mark the occasion, the Duke was guest of honour.

He unveiled a commemorative stone before being conducted on a tour of the gardens.

He also met a number of those involved in the project. The event took place on Monday.

Westgate Towers closed this weekend for restoration work

MOTORISTS are being advised to avoid the Westgate Towers in Canterbury this Sunday as work begins on a restoration project.

The towers - at the centre of recent controversial changes to road layouts - will be completely closed to traffic on September 28 to allow scaffolding to be put up.

It comes ahead of 12 weeks of repairs on the historic site.

The towers will be closed to traffic just this Sunday.

The repairs to the north and east elevations will include essential repairs to the stonework pointing, cleaning and re-roofing the flag turret.

It forms the first part of a larger project to take place over the next couple of years to maintain and restore this historic monument, which was originally built around 1379.

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Jail term for nurse who groomed teenage girl

A FORMER male nurse who called himself 'Meatmarketman' when communicating on a fetish internet chat room has been jailed for the sexual grooming of a teenage girl.

Dale Stanley Bolinger, 58, formerly of Davidson Road in Canterbury, was found guilty by a jury of one count of attempting to meet a girl under the age of 16 following sexual grooming. He pleaded guilty to 10 other offences, some of which relate to internet chat room communication with several other people.

At Canterbury Crown Court, he was sentenced to nine years imprisonment and issued a sexual offences prevention order banning him from accessing the internet without permission.

He was also put on the sex offenders' register indefinitely.

A&E faces intensive care after latest health report again highlights failings

By Sarah Linney
sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

THE accident and emergency department at Medway Maritime Hospital has been told it is still not up to scratch following its latest inspection.

The Care Quality Commission, which inspects hospitals in England, published a report this week after unannounced inspections of the department in July and August.

It is the latest blow to the Gillingham hospital. The trust which runs it is already in 'special measures' for failing to meet national standards.

CQC's chief inspector of hospitals, Professor Sir Mike Richards, said: "In July we found that the department was still falling a long way short of the standards we expect.

"At the end of August we found standards were still not being met.

"We are urgently working with Monitor [health sector regulator] and NHS England to protect and promote the safety and welfare of people using the department."

IN RECOVERY: Medway Maritime

The trust's acting chief executive, Dr Phillip Barnes, said: "We fully accept that improvements need to be achieved in the emergency department and in surgery services and recognise that some changes have not been made at pace.

"That is not to say action has not been taken. We have closed the Vanguard Unit, part of the previous emergency care triage process, and reconfigured the way patients are assessed when they arrive at the emergency department, ensuring they are placed on the correct treatment pathway for their needs as quickly as possible.

"We have also secured support from Homerton University Hospital, which is known for its outstanding emergency department, and an emergency consultant lead and experienced matron are spending two days a week in the department.

"We continue to work closely with our local healthcare partners to ensure services in the community are utilised as effectively as possible by patients who do not require urgent treatment, to reduce pressure on A&E.

"There is no denying there is much more work to do and we will continue to work hard on our plans to ensure we fully comply with the CQC's standards."

SUCCESS: Can mum-of-two triumph?

Chetna cooks up a place in Bake Off semis

TV SHOW The Great British Bake Off saw Chetna Makan reach the semi-finals after she impressed judges Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry.

The 35-year-old mother-of-two from Broadstairs is now down to the final four in the hugely popular programme which this year switched to prime-time BBC1.

Trained as a fashion designer in Mumbai, she moved to Kent ten years ago, developing a love for baking which led her to apply for the talent contest.

On this Wednesday night's show she dazzled with her Croatian povitica bread during the signature round, and then found herself faced with the same task set by the judges in the technical round.

The quality of her cooking ensured even a disappointing 'show stopper' round of doughnuts was not enough to derail her ambition, as 17-year-old Martha found herself kicked out of the tent.

Meanwhile, Paul Hollywood, who lives near Canterbury, has been confirmed to appear at Buckmore Park go-karting circuit in Chatham to open a charity event on October 8.

He will be unleashing more than 30 of the country's finest young motorsports drivers who will be taking to the track in the Henry Surtees Challenge.

The event is in memory of the young driver killed at Brands Hatch in 2009.

Tourist attractions to give away free tickets

ANNUAL free ticket giveaway, My Kent Big Weekend, will take place again on March 21-22 next year.

The date for the popular event was confirmed this week.

Designed as providing a key early season boost to the county's tourist industry, last year 21,000 free tickets were put up for grabs. Only those living in Kent can apply for the tickets, which cover more than 120 attractions and destinations.

The event is organised by the county's tourism champions Visit Kent.

Its chief executive, Sandra Matthews-Marsh, said: "The My Kent Big Weekend has become hugely important in showcasing the county's amazing array of visitor attractions and activities to local people, who are then able to recommend the great places on their doorstep to friends and relatives when they visit."

Attractions can sign-up to take part at www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk.

Smokers get a month to kick deadly habit

HEALTH chiefs will be urging smokers across the county to stub out the habit as part of the nationwide Stoptober campaign running throughout October.

The aim is to get the nation's eight million smokers to break their addiction for 28 days - thus greatly enhancing their ability to quit for good.

Commissioned by KCC, Kent Community Health NHS Trust (KCHT) offers year-round support to quit smoking and also runs a series of special Stoptober quit clubs.

Graham Thomas, the stop smoking manager for KCHT, said: "It can be tough to quit smoking, but you don't have to go it alone.

"You're up to ten times more likely to quit with our support.

"If a quit club isn't your thing, we also offer one-to-one sessions with trained advisors who can help you. More than 60,000 people in Kent have quit with our support and many of our clients say it was easier than they thought it was going to be."

Probe after cat shot and killed by air rifle

AN INVESTIGATION is under way after a cat was shot and killed in an air rifle attack.

The RSPCA is appealing for information after Ciao, an eight-year-old cream cat, was discovered under a hedge in his back garden in Jarvis Lane in Cranbrook on the morning of September 7.

He died shortly after of heart failure resulting from the trauma. An x-ray showed an air rifle pellet near his liver.

CCTV footage shows Ciao walking down the garden path earlier that morning, limping in clear discomfort, and then climbing under a hedge.

Tina O'Leary, Ciao's owner, said: "It makes me so angry to think about how he must have suffered for all those hours. The vet said it was such a close shot that the pellet had gone through the stomach and lodged near his liver, which meant he was being gradually poisoned. He must have been in such agony.

RSPCA inspector Vikki Dawe said: "Anyone with information can call us on 0300 123 8018."

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Last chance to put YOUR question to Kent PCC Ann Barnes

QUESTION TIME: Ann Barnes will open up to KoS readers

KENT on Sunday is giving our readers the chance to put their questions directly to Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes.

Mrs Barnes has never strayed far from the headlines since she was elected to the post in November 2012.

And now you can put your questions directly to her – with no topic out of bounds.

In her role as the county's first ever crime commissioner, she is tasked with overseeing the chief constable and holding him to account in delivering policing across Kent, while also overseeing funding.

She has no say on operational matters – those decisions remain firmly with the chief constable.

But she is certainly influential within a force facing some of the most damaging cuts in recent history, and the public's continued fear of crime and desire to see more 'Bobbies on the beat'.

As an independent candidate, she has certainly managed to raise the awareness of a position which has attracted many critics since being introduced by the Coalition to provide an individual accountable for the police force.

Since being elected, she's had some notable victories, including the establishment of a round-the-clock Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Maidstone, and has recently put pressure on the Prime Minister to stop the Kent taxpayer having to foot the bill for the renewal of fire arm licences.

Her two-year spell in charge has not been without incident, however.

Problems over the appointment of Paris Brown as her youth commissioner, and a misjudged Channel 4 documentary which set out to look at the role, but ended up making Mrs Barnes something of a figure of fun, has blotted her copy book.

One thing she has certainly achieved is to ensure the public know who she is and the role she holds.

As the previous nigh-on invisible head of the Kent Police Authority – which the office of commissioner replaced – she has become a visible presence.

Now she has vowed to answer our readers openly and honestly.

All you need to do is email, tweet or write to us with your question. We'll then select the best and most probing and put them to Mrs Barnes in person.

All the responses will be published in a future edition of Kent on Sunday.

To put your question to Mrs Barnes, simply email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk and put in the subject line 'Ann Barnes Q&A'. Or, alternatively, email them to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN25 1PP. All questions must be received no later than noon on September 30. Alternatively, you can tweet your question to us on Twitter – see below for details.

PUT YOUR QUESTION TO ANN BARNES...

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Manston set for £1bn development, but runway is set to be ripped up

Maria Chiorando reports on another dramatic week in the long-runing saga of Thanet's Manston Airport

ONLY days after a government minister vowed Manston Airport had the support of the Coalition, it was dramatically unveiled this week the site had been sold in a multimillion-pound deal.

And in what will be a body blow to campaigners, the new owners say the runway will be ripped up and the airport replaced by housing and a business park.

The news came after a visit from MP Grant Shapps, who vowed to support all efforts to reopen the stricken airport.

As hundreds gathered to show their support, what even the Government apparently didn't realise was that owner Ann Gloag was in the final stages of securing a deal, rumoured to be around £24 million, with the team behind the transformation of the Discovery Park in Sandwich – the former Pfizer site.

It marks a remarkable return on Ms Gloag's investment. She bought the site for just £1 last November, promising to turn it into a thriving airport.

But by May she announced it was to shut, putting 150 staff out of work.

Despite a last-gasp effort by US investment firm RiverOak to buy the site for what it claimed was the £7m asking price, it was rejected and all flights stopped.

Since then, Ms Gloag has auctioned off most of the fixtures and fittings, leaving the site an empty shell.

The closure left many locals fuming and fearful the site would simply be turned into a giant housing estate.

Now, it seems, their fears could become a reality.

Developers Chris Musgrave and Trevor Cartner say they initially approached Ms Gloag earlier this summer. Their proposals, in which they pledge to invest £1 billion, do not include an airport.

Speaking to KoS this week, Mr Musgrave explained: "We are planning a mixed-use area, in line with our Wynyard Park development [in Billingham, County Durham], which is a combination of a business park with residential properties."

He declined to comment on the site's selling price, describing it as "commercially sensitive".

They have set up a new company, in which Ms Gloag retains a minority interest, and while all Mr Musgrave was prepared to say was "we own the majority stake", market speculation puts the split at around 80/20 in the new owners' favour.

While the two camps have known each other for some time, Mr Musgrave said: "The deal has only been going on for two weeks, but we had spoken to Ms Gloag four or five weeks before that."

In terms of Ms Gloag's role in the development of the site, he said: "She sees us as having the expertise, so we're the ones on site. We have executive control, put it like that."

NEW COURSE: Ann Gloag's purchase of Manston Airport has seen many twists and turns during the last 10 months

The notoriously publicity shy Ms Gloag, who has not granted a single interview since acquiring the site last year, issued a short statement when the sale was announced on Tuesday.

She said: "Trevor and Chris are a credible team with a proven track record in creating high quality jobs through redevelopment opportunities.

"Their business plan looks thorough, considered, and viable and, with the support of the local community, will deliver thousands of local jobs and many community benefits in the coming years."

Information leaked by Ms Gloag's camp suggested the airport, before its closure, was haemorrhaging £10,000 a day, though the veracity of this claim has since been questioned by pro-airport campaigners, who say the figure was simply designed to be the final nail in the airfield's coffin.

However, there is no denying Manston Airport has failed to ever demonstrate it can be a viable, long-term proposition, with a catalogue of failed efforts to revive its fortunes, since it was sold by the Ministry of Defence in 1989.

There is, however, vocal support in the community for the airport to survive – having been touted for years as a key cog in east Kent's regeneration plans.

Pressure reached such a point Thanet District Council initiated investigations into serving a Compulsory Purchase Order (a CPO) on Ms Gloag to claim control of the site – and then sell it to RiverOak. A CPO can be served by a local authority in exceptional circumstances on privately owned land if perceived to be in the public interest.

The council insists those discussions will continue.

But for many, there was a sense of surprise at the latest twist in the ongoing Manston saga.

Thanet North MP, the Conservative Sir Roger Gale, who supported the council's CPO efforts, said he had even received assurances from the prime minister, David Cameron, that the Government supported the airport.

This was echoed when MP without portfolio Grant Shapps made his trip to Manston on September 19, to reiterate the support, which was, in his words, "abstract" rather than practical.

Sir Roger said: "The view I have expressed is that we want it to remain as an airport, and I am committed to fighting for that.

"The new plans suggest that 4,000 new jobs will be created over 20 years, and there will be billions invested. We do need employment in Thanet, but this is an airy-fairy proposal, not a commitment to creating new jobs quickly. These proposals effectively suggest that a whole new town will be created, but that is not what Thanet wants.

"We want the airport, and we will continue fighting for the airport."

This is a view shared by others, with Dan Light, founder of Save Manston Airport campaign claiming: "We still want the Compulsory Purchase Order to go ahead, and we believe it can still go ahead, despite the new owners."

Paul Carter, leader of Kent County Council, said the developers had a "fantastic track record" and said he was broadly supportive of the news.

Thanet District Council has been more reserved so far.

With a meeting scheduled for October 16 to decide the outcome of a possible CPO, it said: "The council has been clear that a CPO will not go ahead unless there is evidence of the economic viability of the site operating as an airport and a suitable investor identified to cover all of the costs required."

RiverOak is also still holding out hope it could still sweep in, going on record to urge the council to continue with its CPO bid, and that it remains committed to a long-term plan to invest in the airport.

New owner Chris Musgrave said: "The council is in the middle of the CPO process, and they now have to follow that process. When they started, there was no alternative.

"Yes, we are concerned but we understand the process will run its course."

For now, Mr Musgrave and Mr Cartner are keen to stress the potential local benefits of their plan, although they have few details they either can, or will, give at the moment

Mr Musgrave said: "We don't know about housing numbers yet, we are looking to appoint a planning team, and will be engaging with the councils and looking at starting public consultations.

"We understand there's a lot of emotion around the airport, but the reality is that it's been losing money for years and years. It hasn't worked as a business. We can't be specific yet, but we believe we can create a lot of jobs on that site – there will be local jobs for local people."

CPO last chance to save airport?

MATTHEW Horton QC is an expert on the compulsory purchase process.

He says: "When it comes to a CPO, the central consideration in deciding is whether it will be in the public interest.

"This is because a CPO is a fairly draconian step, swooping in and forcing people to sell their land.

"You also have to look at how the land is allocated in the Local Plan [the status of Manston is currently unclear] if this land is currently allocated as an airport, but has been sold by its owner to a purchaser who is gambling on being able to do something else with it, they may find they are unable to do so because of planning permission.

"I would have thought that if the land is still shown as an airfield, and if a case can be made for using it for that purpose, then there could be the beginning of a case – but again, there are complications.

"Put simply, there has to be a realistic prospect of a successful airport being achieved, and indeed whether that is more desirable than the proposed development."

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Pictures: ARNAUD STEPHENSON

LEARNING CURVES: As part of the University of Kent's 50th anniversary celebrations, it has installed a 33m-high Kent Eye, which offers 10-minute trips and will remain in place until October 19

University reaches for the sky with its eye-catching 50th anniversary

Institution's temporary Kent Eye offers students and visitors panoramic views over city of Canterbury

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

FORGET going all the way to the capital for a ride on the London Eye – we now have the Kent Eye.

It's not quite as big, but it does offer a sensational view across Canterbury's rooftops, including the glorious cathedral.

It is all part of the University of Kent's 50th anniversary celebrations.

There are events and ceremonies taking place at its Canterbury and Medway campuses, plus its postgraduate centres in Brussels, Paris, Athens and Rome.

These include a series of lectures by university staff, history projects, a community open day at Canterbury and a public debate about Europe hosted by university's chancellor, TV presenter Gavin Esler.

But surely the visual centrepiece is this astonishing big wheel.

It stands 33 metres high and offers a breathtaking ride in its 24 pods, taking 10 minutes to completely rotate once.

It opened on Wednesday and remains in place until October 19.

The Kent Eye provides students, staff and visitors to the campus a rare opportunity to see the city from a very unusual angle.

A spokesman for the university said: "This is one of the biggest attractions during the 50th anniversary of the university.

"It is an exciting opportunity to see the university and the city of Canterbury, offering you a panoramic view of the surrounding areas."

The big wheel returns again to the slopes between the Rutherford and Eliot lawns from July 1 to October 15 next year.

By the end of its 50th year, the university aims to have raised £1 million for the Kent Opportunity Fund which supports students working through financial hardship, scholarships and extra-curricular activities.

Deputy vice-chancellor, Professor Keith Mander, said: "After considerable planning and consultation we will launch our anniversary celebrations with what we hope will be memorable ceremonies at our Canterbury and Medway campuses.

"The university's anniversary activities over the next year will also give everyone the opportunity to be involved in and reflect on Kent's many successes and achievements over the past 50 years, as well as contribute to the course and direction of the next 50."

■ **Opening hours for the Kent Eye are 2pm to 8pm Monday to Thursday. On Fridays and Saturdays it can be ridden from 10am to 2pm and 3pm to 9pm. On Sundays it will be 11am to 6pm. A ride costs £6, and £5 for holders of a MyCanterbury card, and then £4 for those under 12.**

HIGH RIDERS: Visitors get ready to enjoy the great views from the Kent Eye

Police out in force ahead of lorry driver port protest

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

THE Freight Transport Association is calling for more protection for lorry drivers amid mounting tension over methods used by migrants to gain illegal entry to the UK.

The organisation says hefty fines of £2,000 per migrant are applied to drivers if stowaways are discovered – even if the driver was unaware they were there.

In some cases, drivers have been forced to take out loans to pay off the fines, the FTA, based in Tunbridge Wells, claims.

The call comes amid a weekend of planned disruption at the port of Dover with protests to be staged outside the port in support of lorry drivers. The FTA is not involved, but the event is organised by a group calling themselves 'Support the Calais to Dover Truckers'.

Starting on Saturday, the protest, 'Close The Port Of Dover, Secure Our Border', was due to end at 5pm on Sunday. Organisers were unavailable to comment, amid fears it could be hijacked by other protestors.

Police have already said they will not tolerate any possible blockade, ruling such a move as 'illegal'.

There are thought to be 1,500 illegal migrants in Calais trying to get to the UK. Many of them are living in camps and there have been clashes on the streets of the town.

Earlier this month, some 100 invaded the port of Calais and attempted to leap on to a cross-Channel ferry.

But their main effort is to hide in or on lorries in a bid to gain entry to the UK.

Earlier this month, Calais mayor Natacha Bouchart threatened to block the port unless Britain did more to deal with the issue (see box).

Natalie Chapman, head of policy for London and the south east at the FTA, said the organisation did not support a blockade.

"We completely understand drivers' frustration, but our main concern is about the safety and welfare of drivers crossing the Channel," she said.

"Blocking the port will inconvenience huge numbers of people and prevent drivers who are trying to get home from doing so."

However, she said the association understood why lorry drivers felt angry and resentful when they were facing debilitating fines for unwittingly transporting illegal immigrants.

Drivers can be fined up to £2,000 for each migrant – and, as Miss Chapman pointed out, they are lucky if there is only one of them.

"They are facing some very large fines: I have heard stories of drivers having to take out loans to pay them.

"You can fit a lot of people in a vehicle – I think 24 people were found once," she said.

"It doesn't have to be proved that they knew the immigrants were in there, just perhaps that they hadn't taken all reasonable steps to prevent them getting in.

"We advise that drivers lock and secure their vehicles, get alarms and don't stop within 100 kilometres of Calais, but even with those precautions migrants are still getting on board vehicles, and it is very easy for them to do so without you knowing.

"I have heard of migrants climbing onto axles, or walking in front of lorries and forcing them to stop.

"These are very desperate people. They have travelled a long way; they want to get to the UK.

"I have a great deal of sympathy for the lorry drivers' plight as it seems really unfair.

"All the onus shouldn't be put on them. We think drivers are being made scapegoats – I think they are feeling quite abandoned by the UK government."

Kent Police said they would be working to ensure the protest was "safe and peaceful" and had been talking to the protestors.

A spokesman for the Port of Dover said: "Our primary concern is the safety and well-being of our customers and community and keeping the port open."

> **"We advise drivers lock and secure their vehicles, get alarms and don't stop within 100km of Calais, but migrants are still getting on board vehicles"**
>
> **Natalie Chapman,** had of policy for London and south east at FTA

ROUGH: Drivers can be fined up to £2,000 if a migrant is found to be hiding

£12m action plan to stop migrants

BRITAIN'S taxpayers are to stump up £12 million to try to stop illegal immigrants coming into the country from Calais.

Home Secretary Theresa May and her French counterpart Bernard Cazeneuve have agreed an action plan, which will involve strengthening security in Calais, improving border controls – possibly using new technology to combat people smuggling in tankers and refrigerated lorries – and helping victims of human trafficking

There will also be information campaigns directed at migrants about the risks of illegal immigration into Britain, possibly with details on how to apply for asylum in France or for help to return to their home countries.

However, both the Home Office and the French Interior Ministry are refusing to reveal how much France is contributing to the effort.

Mrs May and M Cazeneuve, along with the interior ministers of Germany, Spain and Poland, have also written to the European Commission about the need to stem the flow of illegal migration into Europe.

But Natalie Chapman from the Freight Transport Association, said the money was merely a "sticking plaster" solution.

"We need to tackle why people are trying to come here in the first place, whether that's war, corruption, or quality of life in their home countries," she said.

"We can't have everybody trying to head to just a few countries. We need to try to make sure that the countries people are from are liveable.

"I hope the money will help – it depends what measures they are going to spend it on – but this is an international situation.

"Most lorry drivers don't necessarily blame the migrants – they blame national governments for not taking the issue seriously and allowing these people to put themselves in such a dangerous and desperate situation."

WARNING: Natalie Chapman

Hotel 'Burstin' at the seams with influx of asylum seekers

FULL HOUSE: Grand Hotel Burstin in Folkstone

BUSINESS at a Folkestone hotel has been given an unexpected boost this week with the arrival of 130 asylum seekers as guests.

The Home Office transferred the refugees to the Grand Burstin Hotel in Marine Parade for up to two weeks on Tuesday, although 30 of them left on Wednesday morning.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The UK has a proud history of offering sanctuary to those who need it. These are not offenders. They are not being detained. If they were given temporary housing they would be free to come and go."

He said that the cost of keeping the migrants in the hotel was borne by the organisation which arranges the accommodation on behalf of the Home Office, but added: "We have made clear to them that the use of hotels is only ever acceptable as a short-term measure, and have instructed them to reduce the number of refugees staying at the Grand Burstin as soon as possible."

Shepway council spokesman Jeremy Chambers said the decision was the responsibility of the Government but said that the council was "monitoring the situation".

But Ukip MEP Janice Atkinson condemned the decision, saying: "Folkestone cannot be used as a dumping ground for the Government's inability to control migration."

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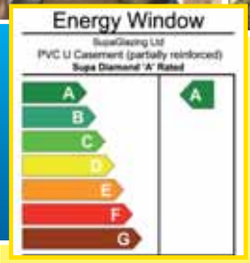

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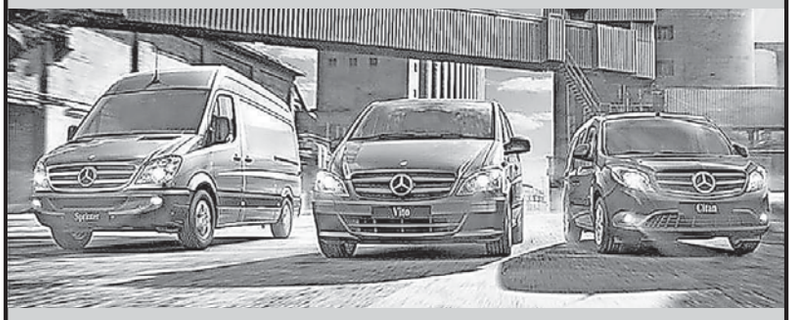

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Now victims of crime will have a place to go where will they be listened to... and believed

One-stop shop in Ashford is due to open next year to plug what Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes has described as 'a very worrying gap in provision'. **Molly Kersey** reports on the project.

A ONE-stop shop for victims of crime is set to open in the east of the county next year, uniting a host of services under one roof.

And it will go hand in hand with a review of how children and youngsters are offered support in the event of becoming a victim of crime.

It comes after a decision by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to devolve responsibility for the commission of victim support services to elected police and crime commissioners.

In Kent, that means as of the end of next March, Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes will assume responsibility. And she's confirmed she already has plans in place.

Currently, the Victim Support charity receives a grant from the MoJ to deliver a national service.

Located in Ashford, what has been dubbed the 'victims' centre' will bring together staff from the Kent Police Witness Care Unit and staff from Victim Support in one building.

The centre will include counselling rooms and signpost people towards specialist services.

Still in its early phases, the centre will focus on helping individuals, replacing the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that came before.

Following the shock revelations of child abuse in Rotherham, authorities are now accutely aware of the need to have sound procedures and facilites in place to prevent any repeat.

A victims' services needs assessment carried out recently by the University of Portsmouth identified some gaps in provision of services to children and young people in Kent – and it is that Mrs Barnes intends to plug with the centre.

"It is a very worrying gap in provision," explains Kent's PCC, "because the present contract actually does not fully commission for that work. We will expect Victim Support to provide some of that work and we'll be looking as well to enhance the work of some providers.

"It's not to say there isn't work going on in these areas, because there is."

The demand for the services has increased and the centre would be pointing people towards charities including Family Matters and East Kent Rape Line, which have their own facilities.

The charities are carrying out vital work, trying to eradicate the shame and fear that the perpetrators of abuse have left young people struggling with.

"They are a beacon of hope in the community," said Mrs Barnes.

"They do an awful lot of good work that just cannot be measured."

Kent Police already has a good working relationship with these charities, which Mrs Barnes is determined will continue as the plans for the victims' centre take shape.

"I sincerely hope it doesn't change," she said.

"I do give them funding because I want them to be very resilient and to be able to work with all the agencies in the county, because they provide very, very specialised advice and it's really important they continue to do so."

East Kent Rape Line, a charity supporting survivors of rape and childhood sexual abuse, has been conducting independently-funded workshops in schools in Canterbury and Shepway.

Project coordinator Kathryn Seymour said:

> **"They are a beacon of hope in the community. They do an awful lot of good work that cannot be measured. I give them funding because I want them to be able to work with all the agencies in the county"**
>
> **Ann Barnes,** Kent's PCC on supporting charities that help the victims of crime

"We have the openness project which is for 11- to 18-year-olds. We do workshops in schools where we look at personal and legal rights and responsibilities. We look at the myths surrounding rape and childhood sexual abuse. We look at safer socialising and where to go if things go wrong.

"We give them our help line number which they can phone up and they can then get pointed in the right direction, but if they just want to talk they can do that as well.

"There can be child protection issues and we have to make that clear at the outset of the phone call – that if we felt there was a child protection issue involved and we knew their address and who they were, we would have to report it.

"If they choose to be anonymous and use a false name then that's fine, because that's their choice."

Ms Seymour explained that the perspective the charity uses to engage children is that while sexual abuse may not have happened to them personally, statistics show we are all likely to know someone who has suffered.

Therefore it is important for them to retain the information that can be used to support someone – and being a good friend can prove invaluable.

"We have tremendous feedback," Ms Seymour said.

So how can people support children who are survivors of sexual abuse?

"Listen to them," says Ms Seymour, "and believe them – always believe, because people don't make this stuff up, as much as it's reported that they do. They really don't. False reporting is very, very rare.

"Help them to get help, they could go to a family member perhaps."

Ms Seymour said that while children could tell a teacher, which is another route that is sometimes suggested, education professionals

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« PAGE 15

are bound by child protection policies that would mean they would have to report the crime and follow strict procedures.

This could mean that things were taken out of the child's hands, possibly leading to a sense of powerlessness.

"What can happen with young people is that they discuss abuse of any sort and they are then bulldozed or bullied into going down a certain route, taking all the power away, all the control."

Ms Seymour has seen a noticeable rise in referrals to the charity.

"We are the only specialist rape crisis centre in east Kent and our referrals have risen; in the first six months of this year they have gone up 96 per cent on last year.

"That's the level that we are looking at, at the moment," she said.

"People are beginning to trust the statutory services a lot more than they used to; a belief that the police will handle it better. In our experience we have found that a huge amount of people are coming forward because of the media.

"It's a really good thing in one way because they are feeling they will be heard, they will be listened to, they will be believed. Even if there's no eventual outcome, they have been heard and they can get help."

Family Matters is also keen to stress the importantce of listening to children, being there for them and above all believing them.

With many children being told "if you tell anyone they won't believe you" by their abusers, belief is a hugely important element to their work.

Barnes' worthy legacy

ANN Barnes's legacy as Kent Police and Crime Commissioner may well prove to be the reinforcing of support organisations for victims of crime.

At the end of last year she unveiled the county's first 24-hour Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Maidstone. It followed the decision to shut a similiar centre in Dartford.

The SARC aims to be a one-stop service, providing medical care and forensic examination following an assault or rape and, in some locations, sexual health services.

SARCs are mostly able to assist in the immediate aftermath of an assault but do not offer long-term specialised counselling and advocacy services that are provided by rape crisis centres.

SARCs are able to offer medical services to anyone including those who do not wish to report the assault to the police – self-referrals.

Service users can then choose whether they would like to inform the police at a later stage and have their samples stored while they are considering what to do next.

The charity offers an outreach service across north-west Kent to help children who have suffered sexual abuse, consisting of 12 one-to-one counselling sessions.

There are no age restrictions – the youngest child to have received counselling was just four years old – and the charity will accept referrals from any source, including self-referrals.

> "We are a specialist rape crisis centre in east Kent and our referrals have risen; in the first six months this year they have gone up 96 per cent"
>
> **Kathryn Seymour,** project coordinator, East Kent Rape Line

The child will be seen by a special childhood therapist, who will make use of various different media depending on their age, such as play therapy.

Children will play with objects such as sand trays while a therapist interacts with them.

"It's about, while you're playing with them, to try and talk to them about what's happened," said clinical director Mary Trevillion.

They also have an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) operating across north-west Kent and Medway who can offer emotional support to victims of recent sexual assaults.

They can be involved with client visits to hospital and dealing with the police, offering support throughout the legal process if a case is going to trial.

"I think that's been very good. It's been fortunate to have that funding from the police and the Ministry of Justice," Ms Trevellion said.

"At the moment they have put a lot of money into the ISVA service and now they are commissioning people to have a look and see what else is missing.

"Hopefully they will put a little bit more into the therapy. That's really what people need."

Ms Trevellion explains that children becoming detatched is one of the signs to look out for in children who may have suffered sexual abuse.

"I think it's signs of withdrawal, or isolating themselves," Ms Trevellion explained. "When those sort of things happen they tend to think they are different from the rest of the world, so they tend to withdraw from their usual friends and other people.

"There are normally outward signs.

"Children become more vacant – they are the signs to look out for."

The charity is keen to stress that victims should never feel shame about what has happened to them.

"People should not be ashamed to call," Ms Trevillion concludes. "They don't have to report it to the police, it can be confidential."

If you are in need of support, call the East Kent Rape Line on 0800 458 28 18 or the Family Matters helpline on 01474 537392.

To find out more about the plans for the victim's centre visit www.kent-pcc.gov.uk.

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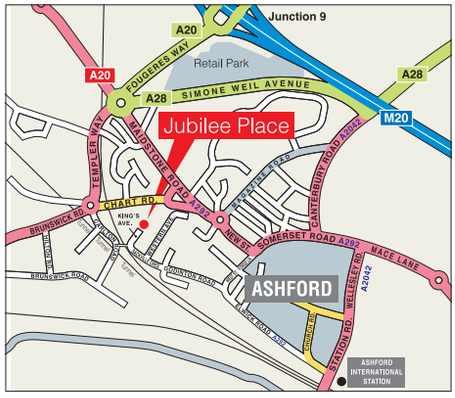

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ALL WHITE HERE: Sharon Resner is owner of the Minnis White House in Birchington. 'My positive reviews are not a con – they are not from my friends, they are from all over the world,' she said.

We're all hotel inspectors now so our opinions can be telling

The rise of the review website means that venue proprietors know a bad experience for customers can be spread across the world within minutes. **Chris Murphy** investigates a powerful phenomenon.

ONCE upon a time, if you wanted to get an idea of whether a restaurant, attraction or holiday was worth a visit, you relied purely on brochures or word of mouth.

Today, however, the internet has provided a global platform for reviews from anyone and everyone, reviews upon which buying decisions are made.

And king of the review websites is surely Tripadvisor. It has become the first stop for many planning a day or night out, so getting a good reputation on the site can make or break a business.

Underestimate its power at your peril.

Peter Birnie is a hotel inspector and advisor who has helped many in Kent be the best they can and says a poor review can be devastating for any business.

Mr Birnie, who also helped turn around the popularity of the Grosvenor in Torquay, the star of TV series The Hotel, said: "The solution is pretty simple: exposure, even negative exposure, can in some ways still be effective.

"After appearing on television, the Grosvenor suddenly became very popular. But that was a special case; people went there because they hoped to be on television, and some because they have a sense of adventure.

"There is one big debate in the world of hotels: and that's how to respond to negative comments on websites like TripAdvisor.

"As a consultant, I would always tell hoteliers to write a response, but do it in a particular way.

"Rather than confront an unhappy guest, use a bit of PR and write that you will contact the guest in person to sort out the problems. That way, if someone reads a negative comment and the response, it shows some sort of investigation is under way – they will believe something is being done to sort out whatever the problem was."

Of course, some bad reviews should be taken with something of a pinch of salt. After all, someone used to the finer things in life may find a budget hotel considerably lacking. For others it will get top ratings for a solid service and value for money.

Mr Birnie added: "There is no doubt these online review sites are incredibly powerful and cannot be avoided by anyone offering accommodation. Their reach has dramatically extended over the past few years.

"Booking sites like LateRooms.com and LastMinute.com also have review sections, but TripAdvisor is the most powerful one, significantly so.

"Hotels now are under pressure to become the number one in their area, and positive reviews are a major way to achieve that.

"One way is to encourage your guests to actually post a review, which in fact can be harder than might be expected.

"Of course, providing a top-notch service will help convince them, but as we all know, not many people are willing to put themselves out to congratulate someone. We are more ready to make a complaint than a complement."

Take one such hotel in west Kent.

Out of the 127 reviews logged, just three said it was 'excellent', but a worrying 82 placed it in the 'terrible' category, while 15 said it was 'poor'.

Many gave it a one 'star' rating with headline comments like "awful, do not stay here"; "on a positive, no mice in the mouse traps"; and even "could it get any worse?".

When we phoned the hotel, the moment we mentioned Tripadvisor, the answerer's previously helpful manner was replaced with a terse "that's a non-starter, I cannot help you."

At the other end of the spectrum, Sharon Resner, owner of the Minnis White House in Birchington, not only knows how to notch up five stars on TripAdvisor in just over a year but how to keep them as well.

She said: "My positive reviews are not a con – they are not my friends, they are from all over the world.

"I had some American guests who wanted fresh coffee beans, so I spent an extra £16 to get plenty of those – I do go that extra mile.

"There is fresh fruit, local Kent produce where possible, directions, and I pick up from the station when needed. So it is all about the top-quality service you can offer and it helps if you are, like me, a people person.

"I have only upset one person and

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TripAdvisor: use it to your own benefit

TRIPADVISOR site gets a staggering 260 million unique monthly visitors and currently has an astonishing 125 million reviews on its website.

Some 93 per cent of travellers say their booking decisions are impacted by online reviews, and 76 per cent of those who use TripAdvisor are researching multiple destinations, venues and accommodation providers, so it is a key tool for visitors deciding where they go, said Ruth Wood from Visit Kent, the county's tourism champions.

She added that the average rating for venues is four out of five – so overall comments are positive rather than negative.

Ms Wood suggests maximising the opportunities TripAdvisor offers.

For instance, register as an owner then upload content to make your entry more engaging and show your venue at its best.

A major key is to get more reviews – the site has a range of free tools you can use, such as the Review Express where you can send a reminder to visitors to upload their comments.

Add the TripAdvisor widget to your own website to make it easier for people to read and add comments – this will encourage others to send in their positive reviews.

Finally, monitor what is being said and respond quickly and profession-

« PAGE 19

she was not happy because I booked out the room she wanted because she had never confirmed, so I couldn't help that.

"I just work very hard and wish I had started years ago."

Mr Birnie said that's exactly what hoteliers need to perfect: get their people skills right and their TripAdvisor ranking will soar.

He said: "There is not really a way to con TripAdvisor by getting friends to file favourable reviews because the site will change its algorithms regularly so certain over-used keywords will no longer count.

"Guests used to leave their comments in a book at the hotel reception, but that's not much use these days.

"Asking guests to leave their comments on places like TripAdvisor while they are still at the hotel can be negative, too, because the website will be suspicious of lots of reviews being left from the same location, which can be easily identified from the device's IP address [the unique reference code that identifies where the internet connection is].

"Getting lots of responses is also a great way to boost a hotel's rankings, rather than simply the star rating left. People are getting used to being online these days, so that is not always difficult to achieve.

"But, of course, guests can promise to leave a review and once they get home and the memory of the holiday that they had has faded they will forget.

"A hotelier can always drop them a chatty casual email to jog them over to TripAdvisor but the wording needs to be clever or it could alienate them if it sounds too pushy. Including a link to the hotel's TripAdvisor page can be helpful but again can appear to be somewhat impersonal.

"I would always suggest the reception staff give their guests a gentle prod as they check out that it would be great if they could leave a short positive review.

"It's usually nicer done face to face and perhaps give them a card that includes the request."

He said there was little chance of a hotel, flight company, rental company, restaurant or destination conning an unsuspecting public with bogus reviews.

Mr Birnie said: "As a customer, check to see how many reviews there are.

"I have always found that if you take out the top few that say a place is the best in the world, and the bottom few that say it's the worst, and use the average, then that is a pretty accurate assessment. It broadly produces a truth.

> **" I have always found if you take out the top and the bottom few and use the average, then that is a pretty accurate assessment. It broadly produces a truth "**
>
> **Peter Birnie,**

"If you want your establishment to rate high, get all your guests to write their reviews and ensure the reviews are kept up to date.

"A glowing review from years ago is almost useless, so it is a constant battle to keep guests and customers to continue their reviews."

He said: "There will always be the guest from hell who will produce a negative review because they are the type to find fault with everything, even when it's not there.

"A hotel should not confront them online – rants from both sides on a review site will look like the hotelier is also a loon."

Restaurants, too, appear on TripAdvisor. One, the Frederic Café Bistro in Maidstone, has a glowing five-star rating, but three of the 296 reviews attacked the service and pricing in the early days.

Owner Ulric Allsebrook tackled those negative reviews, admitting fault and promising to address the criticisms.

These days he admits he doesn't worry so much about reviews but does keep an eye on any emerging trends.

He said: "At the time when we opened I was more sensitive to reviews than I am now.

"It's not that I don't care what they think – you will always get people come in under false pretences or expecting something else.

"I am in the lucky position that the restaurant doesn't open unless I am here. So if someone didn't like something, I would like to think they would tell me.

> **" Our main advice to tourism businesses is TripAdvisor is the world's largest travel site, so, love it or hate it, you cannot afford to ignore it. It gives a competitive edge "**
>
> **Ruth Wood,** head of research and strategy at Visit Kent

"I don't want to deny someone the opportunity to hide behind their computer screen, but the truth is most people who leave here every day are happy and the rest really don't bother me."

Ruth Wood, head of research and strategy at Visit Kent, said a good approval rating was vital to maintain a high level of business passing through.

She said: "Our main advice to tourism businesses is TripAdvisor is the world's largest travel site, so, love it or hate it, you cannot afford to ignore it.

"It really is vital for any business mentioned on review sites like these to do all they can to not only reach a higher standard but to maintain that.

"There are suggestions that once a hotel, for instance, reach five stars they can charge more, and although we do not have any evidence for this we know that prices are dictated by quality, service and value for money.

"I think TripAdvisor is more about giving a business a competitive edge

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Introducing Lake View Court at The Herons, the first phase of lakeside properties at Holborough Lakes, where, as the name suggests, many of the apartments have stunning views across the water.

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Details correct at time of press. Computer generated image depicts streetscene at The Herons and is indicative only. Photography depicts typical interiors and lake view at Holborough Lakes.

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KENT'S TOP 10 VISITOR ATTRACTIONS – ACCORDING TO TRIPADVISOR RATINGS

1. **Wildlife Heritage Foundation**, Smarden ★★★★★ (147 reviews)
2. **The Hawking Centre**, Doddington ★★★★★ (83 reviews)
3. **Lower Leas Coastal Park**, Folkestone ★★★★½ (270 reviews)
4. **Carlton Cinema**, Westgate-on-Sea ★★★★½ (65 reviews)
5. **Ightham Mote**, Ightham ★★★★½ (235 reviews)
6. **Dover Castle**, Dover ★★★★½ (1,429 reviews)
7. **Kent & East Sussex Railway**, Tenterden ★★★★½ (248 reviews)
8. **Royal Cinema**, Faversham ★★★★★ (88 reviews)
9. **Rare Species Conservation Society**, Sandwich ★★★★★ (22 reviews)
10. **Spitfire & Hurricane Museum**, Manston ★★★★½ (140 reviews)

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COUNTRYSIDE
Places People Love

Highways chiefs vow free-flow crossing will be worth the wait

But delay of a month, as we reported last weekend, has left many motorists fuming as well as firing the debate over the controversial charge to use it. **Maria Chiorando** investigates

IT WAS hailed as a possible solution to one of the county's most notorious pressure points.

But the decision last week to delay the introduction of a free-flowing, toll booth-free Dartford Crossing has once again ignited the debate over the controversial crossing.

It had been widely publicised that the booths would be removed and a new state-of-the-art remote payment system be in place and ready to go by the end of October.

The plan has always been to complete all works, including road layout changes, by the end of April 2015, and despite this set back, this still looks to be the case.

But concerns over Dart Charge – the name the new system will be known by (see box) – being problem-free from day one, has meant a further month has been added to the schedule.

During that time, intensive testing will be carried out to avoid any embarrassing hiccups which would further tarnish the Highways Agency's big reveal.

Until then, the current payment arrangements will continue... and so will the queues.

Nigel Gray is a project manager at the Highways Agency.

He said: "I think people will be disappointed. But we are where we are. We are still on target to finish in thr spring."

With some 140,000 vehicles using the crossing above or below the Thames every day, according to the agency, traffic flow will start to ease when the toll booths are removed.

> **"The work has been planned very carefully so that it will minimise disruption: for example, it will be done late at night when traffic volume is at its lowest"**
>
> **Nigel Gray,** project manager at the Highways Agency

Mr Gray explained: "The southbound booths will be removed first, and this will be a fairly quick process – a matter of weeks.

"It will take longer to remove the booths on the northbound side because the work will be a bit more complex.

"The work has been planned very carefully so that it will minimise disruption to motorists: for example, it will be done late at night when traffic volume is at its lowest.

"But this is such a massive change for drivers that we need to make sure that the systems are all thoroughly tested, and in fact the delay has increased our confidence that everything will work well when it launches."

Paul Watters is head of road policy at motoring organisation the AA.

Like many others, he still bristles after the original funding strategy for building the crossing was ignored.

When originally opened, the plan was for the tolls to continue only until the costs had been paid back.

He explains: "The financing of the Dartford Crossing has been controversial since tolls paid for its construction in 2003, but the booths stayed in place despite earlier promises.

"Lack of preparedness and any rapid breakdown of the new 'free-flow' system would have been a PR and logistical disaster for a very expensive charging scheme which most drivers and businesses don't like.

"The 'free-flow' system will allow traffic to cross the Thames unimpeded by toll booths and that is very welcome.

"However, drivers need to know how to pay, the system has to be reliable and there must be the obvious means to be able to pay after crossing such as pay zones – particularly at the Channel crossing points for those heading to the Continent."

The Highways Agency has been keen to stress road users will be made aware of how the new system works well in advance of the launch date.

Acres of advance publicity already will include a high-profile campaign informing motorists of the changes – and encouraging them to pre-register for an account.

Mr Gray said: "They will have considerable time to sign up for a pre-pay account, which for most will be the easiest and cheapest way to pay the charge – with discounts of up to a third on every crossing."

Not all motorists are happy about the changes.

Brian MacDowall, who lives in Herne Bay, is a spokesperson for the Alliance of British Drivers.

He said: "The Dartford Crossing issue is a problem that has gone on for too long. This is a strategic road, and drivers are being forced to pay for something that we were promised would be free.

"In terms of whether it will improve the heavy congestion, that remains to be seen, many people hope this will mean an end to the daily grind, but the promise of free crossing will never be met."

The current charge for cars to use the crossing is £2, but this is set to rise to £2.50 for cars once the new system is in place. There will still be a discount for local residents.

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HOW DOES 'DART CHARGE' WORK?

DART Charge will ease congestion by using a 'free-flow' system, so motorists will no longer have to stop and pay at toll booths.

Motorists will have to pre-pay trips by phone, online, in designated shops or by post. Payment can be in advance, but motorists have until midnight on the day of the crossing to pay.

The cheapest way to pay is to set-up a pre-paid account, which the Highways Agency is urging people to do. The good news is it will mean each costing paid on account will cost just £1.67 each way. What's not quite yet known is how the system will work.

Whether it will operate on an Oyster card style system of automatic topping up, or if money on the account must be used up over a set period of time. The Highways Agency promises all will become clear soon.

Current Dart Tag users can transfer their accounts to the new system, without losing any of their credit.

Motorists who do not pay to use the crossing will receive a penalty charge of up to £105 if not paid within 28 days.

Crossing usage will be monitored by cameras above the exit to the QEII Bridge and entrance to the tunnels with number plate recognition technology. This will identify whether or not vehicles have paid for the crossing. The crossing will still be free between 10pm and 6am everyday.

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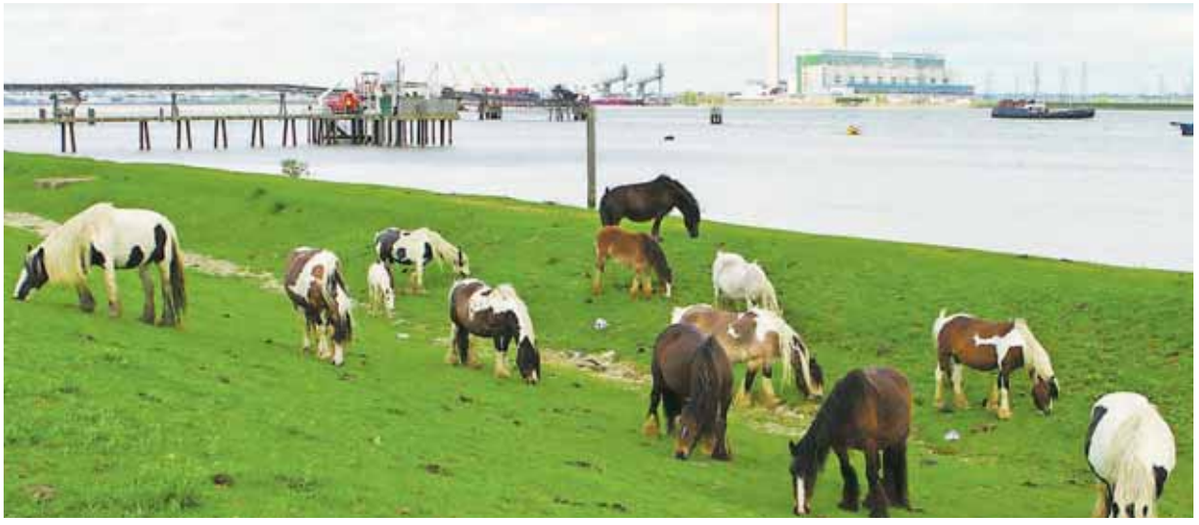
Rural groups want law change to halt 'scourge' of fly-grazing

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



BIG NAGGING PROBLEM: Figures show an increase in the number of horses being abandoned, with many being left in a poor state of health

A LEGAL battle to clampdown on the growing trend of horses being dumped in fields is still floundering, prompting concerned groups to unite in call for steps to be taken.

Known as fly-grazing, the practice is where unscrupulous horse owners ditch their animals on open land.

As the law presently stands, it is then down to the landowner to take legal responsibility for the creatures, which are often left in a poor state of health.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) said Kent and the south east suffers its fair share of the problem.

A spokesman said: "Despite parliamentary debates, the legislation hasn't been tightened up. I don't think we really know the full extent of the problem in Kent, but there are fairly regular reports of fly-grazing on farmland and land earmarked for development.

"The horses are very often just left to their own devices and farmers are afraid to tackle the perpetrators, if they even know who they are.

"There aren't the mechanisms for seizing or moving the horses on."

The NFU said one farmer was so sick of the 50 horses on his land that in the end he spent more than £5,000 paying specialist bailiffs to move them. Now, a combined attack on the Government by a raft of animal welfare organisations may get the legal demands back on track.

The groups involved are Countryside Alliance, the Country Land and Business Association and the NFU, along with charities the RSPCA, World Horse Welfare, the British Horse Society, Redwings Horse Sanctuary, Blue Cross and HorseWorld.

World Horse Welfare says the animals have suffered enough, and it is not fair to put the onus of their well-being on hapless landowners who wake to find someone has abandoned horses on their property.

The NFU in Kent said: "This is the first time the charities and rural organisations have joined together on this issue."

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee held a one-day inquiry on fly-grazing earlier this month and is expected to report back within a few months.

The groups giving evidence used a landmark report to highlight the problems being caused.

In a report compiled by the rural organisations – 'Stop the Scourge: Time to address unlawful fly-grazing in England' – it found more than 4,000 horses are being fly-grazed nationally.

Just during the summer this year, the figure is estimated at more than 3,000 across the south east which includes Kent, Essex and East Sussex. Particular areas of concern are Gravesend, Erith and Dartford.

World Horse Welfare field officer in Kent, Emma Swadlo, said: "We can clear an area of horses and we know within an hour more will be back. Some of these fly-grazing animals are in very poor health. They are usually those at death's door and have no market value at all.

"Often, we know who owns these horses but can't prove it. So with present laws, it is all down to the landowner to take full responsibility of these horses and that just isn't fair.

"When horses die, it can cost them hundreds of pounds to deal with the body. I feel sorry for the landowners and they need to be given more powers."

Stella King, from Canterbury Horse Rescue, added: "It used to be travellers who owned the vast majority of these horses, but since the recession happened, it is normal families who have run out of money.

"I had a call the other day from a woman asking me to take in four horses, but I can't – this year we have been completely full.

"It makes me angry hearing people say the economy is getting back to normal. It's not judging by the number of calls I get from people who can no longer afford to keep a horse. So they take them out and just leave them tied up at the side of the road or in a field.

"They then become someone else's problem, and that is not right. I hope the Government finds a solution, but I have a feeling it won't be in my lifetime."

Tony Smith runs the Brownbread Horse Rescue Centre in Sussex and spends a lot of time and effort tackling the problem in Kent.

He says his farm on the High Weald, of some 150 acres, is currently running at its capacity of almost 70 animals.

He said: "We had an incident in a Sevenoaks field recently when we found 120 horses' bodies – incredibly some were barely alive. It was a terrible scene. We can't take in any more horses as we are full, but so many people across Kent call us to take their animal because they can't afford them any more."

The countryside groups want to use something like the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014 which enables councils and landowners to take swift and cost-effective action to deal with the animals. It also serves as a better deterrent.

Calls to welfare charities about fly-grazing have risen by two thirds in the past three years from people worried about abandoned horses.

Ms Swadlo added: "There are unconfirmed rumours Kent is used as a sort of holding bay for horses being exported to Europe to food suppliers because Dover is the best port to use."

The groups' report reveals the horse meat scandal, the economic downturn, over-breeding and the high costs of keeping horses has created a perfect storm for them to be abandoned.

The organisations said there is hope Elizabeth Truss, the secretary of state for the environment, will support changes to the law, as she understands the problems fly-grazing can cause particularly since the problem has arisen in her own constituency in Norfolk

Parliament is set to debate a proposed change in the law in October when MP Julian Sturdy's Control of Horses Bill, supported by all the organisations behind the report, will have its second reading.

Roly Owers, World Horse Welfare chief executive, said: "It is time for the Government to do its part to help stop the scourge of fly-grazing in our countryside, farms and urban areas, because we cannot solve this problem alone using existing laws.

"For years rural organisations and welfare charities have been calling on Defra [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs] to bring in tougher laws on fly-grazing that will enable landowners, including local authorities, to act more quickly to resolve these situations and serve as a real deterrent."

He said cases in Kent are going up, while in Wales, numbers are decreasing thanks to its new tougher fly-grazing laws introduced in January.

Mr Owers added: "With Julian Sturdy's Private Members Bill the Government has an opportunity to address this issue in England and make a real difference for rural communities and for horse welfare.

"It is not sustainable to leave it to charities to deal with while they are at capacity with so many of the worst cases, nor continue to burden our local authorities with long-winded processes when they are already cash-strapped.

"We believe the upcoming parliamentary activity on this issue will show that the status quo is not an option. The Government should give the time and support necessary to get this Bill onto the statute book before the end of this parliament."

Mixed fortunes for Phones 4U staff after networks buy stores

Chris Murphy reports on deal that has saved jobs in county after last week's dramatic collapse of mobile phone chain

LONG GONE: Some Phones 4U staff will be saved thanks to the new deals

STAFF at Phones 4U stores across the county have been told their fate following the dramatic collapse of the chain last week.

The company went into administration on September 15, after it lost key contracts with the major mobile phone networks.

Now, in an ironic twist, it is those networks which could save many peoples' jobs.

Network providers EE and Vodafone both wanted to buy chunks of the Phones 4U empire, with Vodafone targeting up to 140 stores, while EE looked to get hold of 58.

After a court hearing earlier this week to confirm the estimated £12 million deal could proceed, Vodafone purchased 140 leasehold properties, in-store inventory, fixtures and fittings from Phones 4U.

The deal will save 887 jobs nationwide.

EE will take over 58 stores for £2.5 million "preserving 359 jobs for store employees".

The deals bring mixed blessing to those who worked at the Kent stores. It is thought each branch employed around 10 staff.

Vodafone will take over stores in Biggin Street, Dover, and High Street, Sittingbourne. EE is set to take over stores inside the Sevenoaks shopping centre, Week Street in Maidstone, High Street in Gillingham and High Street in Ramsgate.

However, a number of stores in Kent weren't saved in the deal.

And that means they face an uncertain future unless further deals can be secured.

Stores looking likely to be closed are in Tunbridge Wells, Westwood Cross, Chatham, Bluewater, Canterbury, Gillingham, Folkestone, Gravesend, Ashford, Dartford and Eltham.

Rob Hunt, a partner of PwC, the administrators of Phones 4U, said of the deal with EE: "We are absolutely delighted to have completed this further disposal of 58 Phones 4U stores, which will both recover value for secured creditors and save 359 jobs.

"As with the Vodafone transaction, we consider that this represents the best potential outcome for creditors in the circumstances for these stores, although it remains subject to the approval of the UK courts."

EE, Vodafone, Three and O2 all failed to renew contracts with the independent phone retailer – effectively leaving it with no products to sell.

Phones 4U founder John Caudwell said the closure was as a result of "ruthless actions" of "predatory" mobile phone networks.

He told the BBC's Today programme that it was "unprecedented assassination" of a company he sold on in 2006, after turning it in to a high street giant.

EE said it ended its relationship with Phones 4U to focus on its own shops and cut out intermediaries, while Vodafone rejected any suggestion it had acted inappropriately during contract negotiations.

Thousands of jobs remain at risk at Phones 4U, which had 700 outlets and 5,600 staff.

Some 628 staff at the Phones 4U head office in Newcastle-under-Lyme are losing their jobs.

Its major rival, Carphone Warehouse, says it hopes to offer jobs to some of those staff affected.

It is also still rumoured it could acquire some of the stores vacated by Phones 4U.

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As politicians face up to the reality of the aftermath of the Scottish referendum, **Sarah Linney** talks

The devolution debate: Should we wrestle more control from Westminster?

HOW would our lives be different in Kent if the county could do just what it liked?

If many of the decisions which affect us day to day, on health, education and even tax, were no longer made in Westminster, but at County Hall?

A month ago, that might have sounded like a fanciful question. But in the aftermath of the Scottish referendum, our politicians are asking themselves 101 different questions about how our country is governed.

And, with Scotland promised more devolution – though whether the politicians will keep their word remains to be seen – among them is, shouldn't the rest of the country follow suit?

There have long been calls from some for an English Parliament equivalent to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies.

But one Kent politician would go even further.

Tory Dan Hannan, who represents the county in the European Parliament, has been an advocate of huge devolution for years and outlined his theory in his 2008 book The Plan.

He would hand power over to county and city councils to the point where the UK no longer had a full-time Parliament – and believes this is key to restoring people's faith in politics.

"There is no appetite in England for splitting the country into synthetic regions – John Prescott tried it and a regional assembly in the north east was voted against by four to one – but I would like devolution to counties and cities, genuine units of territory that have people's loyalty," he said.

"I don't see any power exercised in Holyrood that couldn't be exercised in Kent.

"There are 1.6 million people in the county – that's more than quite a lot of US states.

"Wyoming, for example, controls its own criminal justice system, police force and welfare system. I do not believe that people in Kent are less capable of local democratic self rule."

He believes this would be hugely beneficial to the country – with the poorest regions benefiting most.

"It would be brilliant. We would have pluralism, diversity and the chance to pilot new schemes," Mr Hannan said.

"We would get competition, with people seeing what works well and voting accordingly. Tax competition would put downward pressure on rates. It would leave us a much happier, more relaxed country."

Defence, foreign affairs, immigration, big infrastructure decisions (like the site of a new airport) and some elements of taxation and criminal justice would still be decided by Westminster. But welfare, education and some taxation powers would be devolved.

"The House of Commons needn't be full time anymore. It could meet for maybe 40 days a year," Mr Hannan said.

"MPs wouldn't need to be paid so much, so we wouldn't have professional MPs – which is much better, as having a job outside politics keeps politicians in touch with the economy and means that if there is a recession they are affected by it.

"The closest European example of this is Switzerland, which has very strong local democracy and lots of local referenda.

"It's a place where people want to live. It's the only European country that came through the credit crisis without any downturn; so they are getting something right."

He says he believes the changes would reinvigorate the British political system and go some way towards curing the apathy that has overtaken many voters.

"It would change our attitude to the whole political process. Government would be seen as less remote," Mr Hannan added.

"People would participate in local elections in a way they don't now, as there would be something we can all do about it when mistakes are made.

"It would create a situation where your vote can actually change something. It's understandable now when people say their vote won't change anything, and the first step to opening the system up is to shift power back to people at local level."

But isn't it better to come up with laws that work and apply them everywhere, rather than have 40-odd local authorities tinkering away?

"We don't know what the best system is," Mr Hannan explained.

"This way means that if people don't like something, they can see what the alternative is."

Kent County Council leader Paul Carter agrees – and says that the Government's hint that it might devolve more powers to the big cities, including tax and spend powers, should be extended to counties with a record of managing their money well.

"I am a great supporter of empowering county councils and city regions, loosening the reins in Whitehall and trusting in local government without unnecessary bureaucracy," he said.

"There's a lot of interference in Whitehall, and it gets in the way of spending public money wisely. We were allocated about £30 million three years ago to modernise schools, but the scheme is managed from Whitehall and so far nothing has been done.

"The A21 improvement scheme [dualling the busy road between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells] is another example: we said Kent Highways could deliver it for about £70m, but the Department for Transport insisted on using the Highways Agency at a cost of £120m.

"This is not a good use of public funds."

He said Kent had a good track record of spending money sensibly on things like transport and education and complying with government cuts – and often knew better than Whitehall how money should be spent in the county.

"Local knowledge allows people to prioritise expenditure in a sensible way," Mr Carter added.

"If we have 600 schools in Kent and £30m to spend; people sitting behind desks in Whitehall haven't the intimate local knowledge to understand which schools are in greatest need."

The Green Party was the only major UK political party to support the idea of Scottish independence and the party is in favour of the decentralisation of powers.

Kent party leader Stuart Jeffery said he would like to see regional assemblies, covering areas perhaps roughly the size of those covered by MEPs, with county and district councils merged into unitary authorities of between 250,000 and 400,000 people.

Unitary authorities would look after issues like health, education, roads and social care, while taxes would be set at a regional level.

"I would like to see Westminster devolve as much power as it possibly can to the regions," Mr Jeffery said.

"It's about making decisions at the level at which they need to be made.

"Things like health care should be made at a regional or possibly more local level, as close to the people as possible. Different areas already have different council tax.

"Westminster would focus on things that are required at a national level, such as foreign policy, macroeconomic policy and defence, and redistributing wealth to avoid it all being concentrated in the south east. This wouldn't be an extra layer of government, it would be a different layer.

"It's brilliant for a country. People can have a real say, they can be close to politicians, without the distancing that we have now."

But wouldn't giving authorities too much autonomy lead to chaos if, for example, the country ended up with several different education systems?

"I would leave it to unitary authorities to decide the school

LEADER: KCC's Paul Carter wants Kent to have more say over budgets

to key figures in the county about how Kent would fare were it to be given more powers to rule itself

POWER: Devolving power from Westminster would be warmly welcomed by Kent Greens leader Stuart Jeffery (left) who wants regional assemblies

curriculum," Mr Jeffery said.

"I changed schools quite regularly as a child – kids learn what they need to learn. As long as there is reasonableness – you would have to make sure schools taught maths and English, and are not teaching very advanced algebra to four-year-olds – teachers should be able to make decisions over when they teach a particular topic. Kids are all different.

"In health we have guidelines, not rigid diktats, and you have to have a good reason to go outside them. You wouldn't want anything more than that."

However, Medway Council deputy leader Alan Jarrett said that the Localism Act – brought in in 2011 to give councils more powers – was not doing what it had been intended to do.

"The Act meant that on the face of it we decide our own destiny, but there are so many caveats that the whole thing becomes virtually worthless," he said.

"It says you can do what you like as long as Whitehall agrees with it. That's not localism at all.

"For example, this government abolished the cap on council tax, but introduced a requirement for a referendum, which is a cap by another name as the majority of voters do not like paying extra tax.

"There has to be real devolution of powers. You either have real and all encompassing change or you don't bother."

He said a better idea would be for the system to stay as it is but for Whitehall to take more of a back seat.

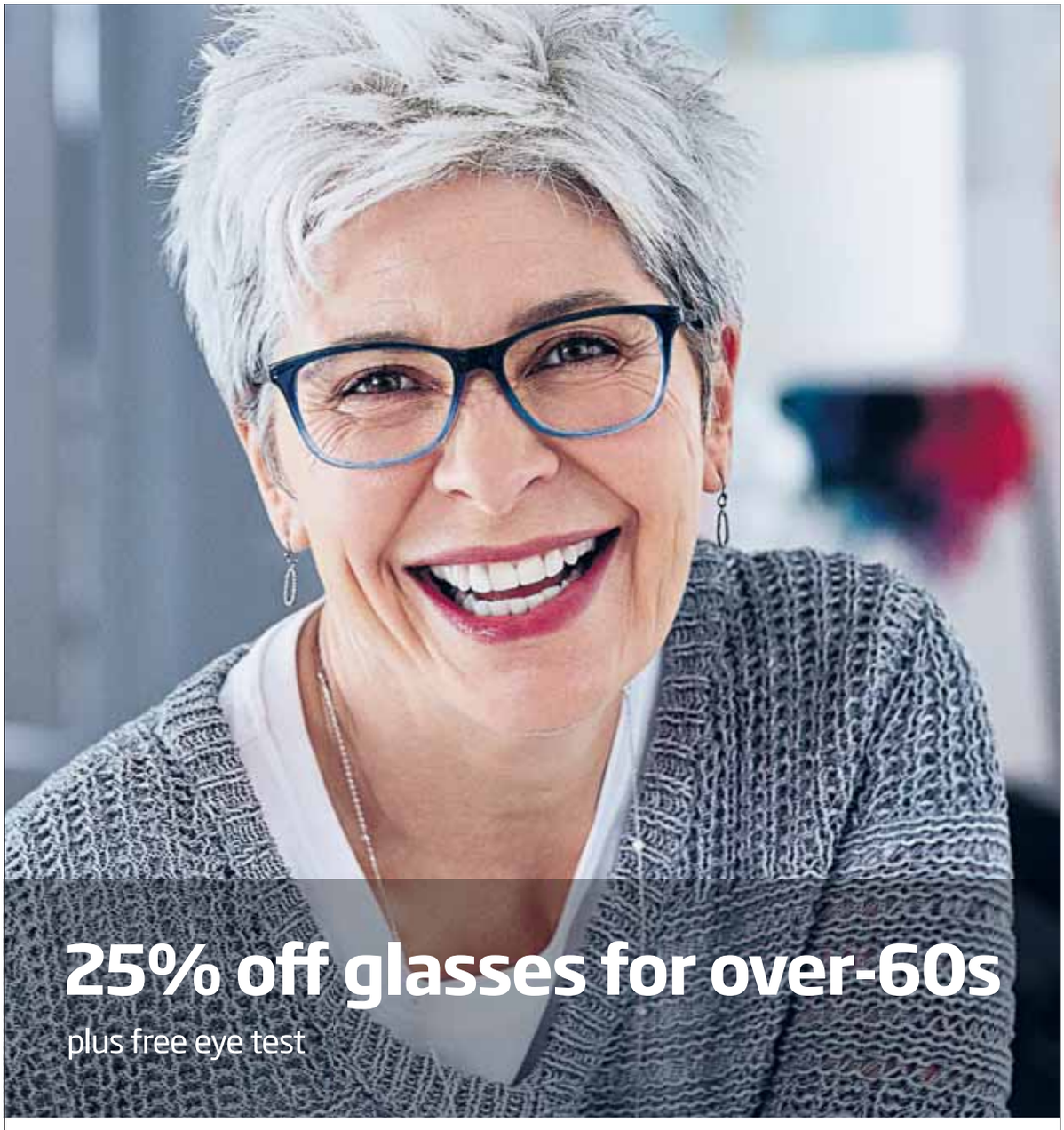
"Every time new structures are put in place it costs money," Cllr Jarrett added.

"By and large we do have the framework there for councils to do more. But we need to take off some of the Whitehall shackles."

He said that Medway had "benefited immeasurably" from its decision in 1998 to become a unitary authority – which combines county council and borough council powers in one – separate from Kent County Council.

"Now we are a cohesive administrative unit, freed from interference from anyone else," Cllr Jarrett said.

"A unitary government is the most efficient form of local government."



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SAFETY FIRST: Station director Martin Pearson (mid left) is confident of Dungeness B safety - a view not shared by Martin Whybrow (mid centre)

Building the barriers in bid to protect nuclear plant from a flood crisis

Jamie Weir takes a trip to the power plant at Dungeness to look at how it is spending millions to prevent any possibility of a Fukushima-style threat

AS THE world watched on in 2011 at the impact of a devastating earthquake and tsunami off the Japanese coast, the tremors were felt far and wide.

No more so than along the corridors of power at the county's nuclear plant at Dungeness, which will soon unveil steps taken as a result of the Far East disaster.

Amid the human tragedy, fears over the stability of the Fukushima nuclear plant – flooded by the sea surge following the earthquake – ensured a nervous time, and the focus to shift to other plants perched on coasts.

Sat on a shingle spit jutting out into the normally calm waters of the English Channel, Dungeness B could, potentially, be vulnerable were the same to happen.

At Fukushima, the problem was caused by the tsunami overwhelming sea defences and threatening a major meltdown, as well as the local area having to be evacuated.

It prompted, unsurprisingly, a review into nuclear safety on our shores.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), which acts as the Government's nuclear safety regulator, published a report in the wake of Fukushima, in which it concluded that UK nuclear facilities have "no fundamental weaknesses".

However, the chief nuclear inspector Dr Mike Weightman's original report made 38 recommendations.

One of the lessons he felt could be learned in the wake of the Japanese disaster was to do with the risks associated from flooding.

Dr Weightman said at the time: "The Office for Nuclear Regulation already requires protection of nuclear sites against the worst-case scenarios that are predictable for the UK.

"But we are not complacent. Our philosophy is one of continuous improvement: no matter how high our standards, the quest for improvement must never stop.

"We will ensure lessons are learned from Fukushima. Action has already been taken in many cases, with work under way to further enhance safety at UK sites."

As part of the recommendations, the ONR requested all UK nuclear licensees to undertake a review of flooding studies, including from tsunamis, to confirm the design basis and margins for flooding at UK nuclear sites, and implement any identified improvements.

EDF Energy, the firm which operates Dungeness B, undertook studies and, in December 2012, identified a shortfall where there was an increased likelihood of water finding its way onto site over the shingle bank than previously thought.

An additional review in early 2013, identified the defences may be 'outflanked' by seawater resulting in flooding on the site.

As part of the studies, EDF built a 1:25 scale replica of the shingle bank at Dungeness to gain an insight of what would happen in extreme weather events.

EDF put in place a programme to meet the ONR recommendations, with a particular emphasis on its flood defences.

Station director at Dungeness B is Martin Pearson. He explains: "We are never complacent and constantly look for ways to improve safety. What happened in Fukushima couldn't happen at Dungeness B."

But despite this confidence in the systems in place, Dungeness B was taken offline for two months in May last year for what EDF described as 'improvements to flood defences around the power station'.

During the period, EDF was busy preparing plans for a new flood defence barrier, which is now almost complete.

As part of the ongoing flood defence work being done to strengthen the site against storm surges, or tidal waves, EDF has recently submitted a planning application for a large new 'rock armour' wall which will sit behind the shingle bank.

The wall will be the final phase of new flood defences at the site, with EDF investing around £5 million into protecting the site from extreme events.

EDF says the work, which started in 2013, will cover statistically very unlikely events – ones which happen only once every 10,000 years.

Before the recent work, the station had modelled its risks against a one in 1,000-year event – that was still greater than the risks which the Fukushima plant had modelled according to the deputy head of Japan's Atomic Energy Commission, Tatsujiro Suzuki.

He said: "There were studies which showed a one in 1,000 year probability of the Fukushima coast being hit by a 10-metre tsunami. Unfortunately, those studies were dismissed. The nuclear industry didn't think it would happen, so they didn't prepare for it."

Dungeness B is very different according to Mr Pearson, with the station preparing for every eventuality.

He said: "Safety always overrides any commercial considerations and we only operate with the approval of the independent nuclear regulator. We decided to raise standards even further following Fukushima, but that does not mean there was a greater risk to the power station.

"The site is protected against weather scenarios that are statistically extremely unlikely and we have a whole range of defences to protect us from events that would be unimaginable in the UK.

"Since the events at Fukushima in March 2011, we've completed in-depth reviews to consider again extreme natural events like earthquakes and floods.

"These extensive studies assure us that the UK plants are safe to continue operation and this is a conclusion shared by the ONR, but we never take safety for granted.

"We're delivering a comprehensive work programme to further enhance resilience and response to extreme natural events.

"The site has many existing layers of protection against flooding and this package of works further enhances those defences to cover extremely unlikely severe weather events.

"The flood defence wall is now complete and we have just put in a planning application for the 'rock armour' boulder defence which will further protect the sea-facing side of the site. Members of the public are always invited to tour the site where they will see some of the work we have already done."

But while EDF is happy with the site, KCC Green Party councillor for Hythe, Martin Whybrow, still harbours concerns about safety.

He said: "Dungeness B has its own particular issues, and with a number of unplanned outages at the site, combined with the fact that it is a very old reactor, it is certainly something to be concerned about."

That is a sentiment which the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) also echoes when talking about Dungeness B.

Its general secretary, Kate Hudson, said: "The risk of nuclear accident can never be fully ruled out: and the consequences in the UK would be devastating. Dungeness is no exception.

"The shadow of events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant looms large over the UK's nuclear power stations: a catastrophe which has seen 160,000 people evacuated and will cost more than $50 billion over a 30-year period to attempt to remedy."

However, the ONR seem satisfied that Dungeness is safe from any potential Fukushima type events, with its deputy chief inspector, Mark Foy, telling KoS that the lessons were learned from the Japanese tragedy.

Mr Foy said: "Fukushima provided the world with a unique opportunity to learn from a serious nuclear accident and ONR has ensured that the lessons from the tragic sequence of events in 2011 have been used to enhance the safety of the UK nuclear industry.

"ONR is satisfied that the resultant improvements carried out by EDF on its reactor sites will enhance the protection against extreme natural events and their potential to initiate a severe accident.

"We are satisfied the UK reactor fleet is safe to operate, however we will continue to ensure that licensees pursue a strategy of continuously improving the standard of safety on their sites."

But some are still cautious about safety at the Dungeness site, despite the work which has been completed at the site.

Friends of the Earth south east group representative, Stuart Cox, told KoS: "Although modelling for risks takes place, you can't create a statistical model for everything, and there is always a risk, no matter how small, that something may go wrong. That's what happened at Fukushima."

The team at Dungeness, however, are eager to reinforce the safety credentials of the site,

MODEL: EDF built this to-scale model of how a flood could hit the shingle bank at Dungeness

WHAT ARE SAFETY MEASURES AT DUNGENESS B?

THE plant has a variety of different safety shut down systems in place. This is to ensure that even if one were to fail, the others could still successfully close down the reactor to prevent any nuclear disaster.

In an advanced gas cooled reactor (AGR) – which Dungeness B is – the graphite reactor core contains channels for boron steel control rods.

These can be raised and lowered to control the reactor power. The boron steel rods absorb neutrons so that the chain reaction in a reactor core may be slowed or stopped by inserting them further, or accelerated by withdrawing them.

In a situation which posed any kind of nuclear safety risk, EDF says the control rods will automatically drop into the reactor, stopping it completely.

It takes around 10 seconds for the rods to insert and the reactor to be completely shut down, meaning that it can, quite literally, be shut off at the flick of a switch.

The control rods are considered a 'high reliability system' and have been classified as the highest level of reliability that a single system can be classified to. This means that its statistical chance of failing is just one in every 100,000 years.

There are 57 of these boron steel control rods in each reactor at Dungeness B. In the event that one, or even two, failed, the reactor would still be safely shut down.

The station says that it operates using a fail-safe assumption that two do not drop into the reactor. That, it says, means it is still able to prove it would be able to cope with that scenario each time the reactor is shut down.

In more than 30 years of operation at Dungeness B there has never been an instance where a control rod has failed to insert.

If more than two control rods fail to insert into the reactor core, a secondary shutdown system can take over. This is when nitrogen would be injected into the reactor. That acts as a neutron absorber, stopping the chain fission reaction.

Once the reactor is shut down, the primary priority for plant workers is to ensure that it is cooled properly. There are three different sets of systems, located in different areas of the plant, which can be used to feed the boiler pumps.

The overall cooling system is considered reliable and has not failed in over 30 years of safe operation. The plant has never had to use either of the two back-up systems.

If the overall cooling system did lose power due to an electrical shutdown, the boiler feed pumps would be powered by dedicated diesel generators.

These are protected by even more flood proofing than the whole site has, making them practically impregnable.

Only one boiler feed pump would be needed for adequate cooling, however to allow for maintenance or failures the plant has three. They are all checked and maintained on a regular basis.

If both of those systems failed, there is yet another system that would be able to cool down the reactor, known as the additional feed system.

with Mr Pearson reiterating that the station has been operational for more than 30 years, with both the national and EU nuclear regulators happy that it has consistently operated safely.

He said: "We have been generating low carbon power safely at Dungeness B for over 30 years.

"At the end of this year we hope to be able to announce a life extension of up to 10 years which would take the operating life up to 2028.

"Numerous safety reviews of all areas of the plant form the basis for that decision, and these are examined by the independent regulator, the ONR.

"Both the independent regulator in the UK and also the EU regulator have agreed that Dungeness B is safe to operate. We keep them updated on all activities on site and work very closely with them.

"Nuclear safety has no grey areas. Every safety limit is hugely conservative and includes wide safety margins. Our safety cases are approved by the ONR and we report any breach outside of them, no matter how small."

Architects hope grand designs build on community benefits

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

FINALISTS for a leading design awards have been unveiled.

Eighteen projects have been confirmed as being in the running for the 2014 Kent Design and Development Awards.

Held every two years, the awards look to "celebrate design and construction excellence" across the county.

Projects which will now be examined by the judging panel include schools, sports facilities, high streets and even a tidal defence.

It is jointly organised and sponsored by Kent County Council, planning consultants DHA Planning and Tunbridge Wells-based PR agency Maxim.

Mark Dance, cabinet member for economic development at KCC, said: "Economic improvements, combined with a positive outlook for the county's property industry, mean there is a lot to celebrate in Kent and we look forward to honouring the winners in November."

Judges' site visits are under way, with the winners to be announced at an awards ceremony on November 6.

DESIGNS: Left to right, Gravesend Cyclopark, the Skinners' Kent Academy in Tunbridge Wells and Three Hills Sports Park in Folkestone are on shortlist

SHORTLIST

- Three Hills Sports Park in Folkestone
- The Skinners' Kent Academy in Tunbridge Wells
- Goat Lees Primary School
- Cyclopark in Gravesend
- Ambleside, Faversham
- Armstrong Road, Maidstone
- Centre for Environmental Technologies, Broadstairs
- Farningham House Cottage Forge Fields, Bethersden
- Hadlow Tower
- Hermitage Court Units G&H, Maidstone
- Horsted Park, Chatham
- Kent Institute of Medicine and Surgery, Maidstone
- Maidstone High Street
- Medway Crematorium
- Pobble House, Romney Marsh
- Sandwich Town Tidal Defences
- St Michael's School, Otford.

CATEGORIES

INCLUDING:
- Civils and infrastructure
- Commercial, industrial and retail
- Environmental performance
- Public building – commercial and education
- Residential – minor and major

The winners of the five categories will go forward to compete for the Project of the Year trophy.

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Rye College **supports** and **challenges** over 700 young people and 100 staff to develop their **academic, creative, scientific, sporting, leadership** and **social skills**. As a college community we seek to ensure that our students grow to become members of our society who can **REACH**:

Respect *each other, themselves and our environment*
Engage *in every new opportunity as a learning opportunity*
Achieve *more than they thought possible personally and collectively*
Curiosity *fuels our days and we never ever stop asking "why?"*
Happy *people learn more, achieve more and become more*

The curriculum for Rye College is designed to encourage a thirst for knowledge and understanding and a love of learning. It covers a range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence. Rye College has been identified as a Good school by both OFSTED and East Sussex and we are working hard to ensure that the standards we set for ourselves will bring us recognition for the excellent standard of education we provide for our young people.

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WOULD you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395**

WIDOW early 60s, seeking male similar age, like walks, films, dancing and gsoh. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4341940**

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301**

ADVENTUROUS attractive lady seeks no strings casual times with discreet gent. **Tel: No. 0905 002 1913 Box 409991**

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779**

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1917 Box 408297**

MARIE 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit/active, WLTM fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037**

CARLY, 25yrs, and v naughty seeks man for discreet fun. My job includes trael so anywhere is fine for me. **Tel No: 0905 002 1921 Box 350727**

SOPHIE 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717**

SARAH, married lady seeks discreet no strings fun with gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1925 Box 408291**

SALLY, 36yrs, married but husband works away seeks discreet gent any age for fun only. **Text only Box: 4492484**

34YR single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410709**

SAMANTHA, solvent, sensual business women, 38yrs, travels a lot and seeks fun on the road. I'm married so please be discreet. **Box: 4495859 Text Only**

PROMOTIONAL ADVERT OF THE WEEK

FELICITY, I'm quite posh and spoilt, 23yrs, Just left uni and looking for some adventures with an older gent. **Box No: 4507090 Text only**

BUSTY Caribbean lady who loves music, dance and singing, looking for nice older guy for mutual adult no strings fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410305**

JASMINE, 22yrs, seeks older gent for daytime meetings as she works a nightshift most days. **Box: 4495860 Text Only**

LYN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137**

FIONA, young 32yrs, seeks uncomplicated fun with chap any age or area, texts only please, I'm nervous on the phone. **Box: 4495861 Text Only**

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413**

RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busty, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410835**

PHILLY, 20yrs, just left college, seeks older man for daytime fun, must be discreet as she has strict parents. **Text only Box: 4492485**

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467**

LINDY, 43yrs young, married with husband away. Seeks discreet gent any age/area for no strings. **Box 4459439 Text only**

JENNI, sensual lady, 23yrs seeks mature experienced man for no strings, daytime fun. **Box 4459440 Text only**

CATHY very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301**

RACHEL 36yr old nurse looking to raise the temperature of reliable sincere male. I have my OACH, a single mum to 1, love gym, cosy meals, animals etc. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411045**

SUSAN 29 green eyes, dark hair, slim, looking for Mr tall dark and handsome to take me out, enjoy adult times without complications just fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410957**

KAREN blonde blue eyed slim 35yr old interesting female looking for good times, call me if are in a similar situation, board and looking for some fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410719**

JANE pretty size 12, loves going out socialising, countryside, meals out, looking for no strings fun, nothing heavy, give me a call if you are seeking similar. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410579**

SUE 32 blonde blue eyed curvy nurse, caring, loving romantic, faithful, likes cosy nights in with a nice wine and lovely man, if that's you, call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410571**

JANE tall leggy blonde size 12, nice/eyes, likes yoga, swimming, meals in/out, etc, WLTM nice tall male/dad with similar interests to spend time with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410487**

WOULD you like to be my Valentine? Widow 68, seeking Valentine 68-70, likes most things, would like to share them with someone. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410695**

BLONDE pretty, long legged, voluptuous, blue eyes, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410585**

LAURA happy size 12-14, attractive, loves shopping, gym, music, clubbing, eating in/out, looking for sincere honest male looking for more than just good fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410713**

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025**

KATIE 21yr old very attractive female who is up for most things, looking for daytime fun, no strings and discreet pls. Age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410573**

JEWISH widow, 67, loves animals, seeks genuine, Jewish gent, 68-73 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410547**

DAWN 38 dark hair/eyed medium built busty female who loves nights in/out, WLTM fun honest male/single dad with GSOH to help mend my broken heart. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410483**

TERRI 44 green eyed long legged busty blonde, loves to dress up and look feminine, seeking loving, fun, honest professional to fall head over her heals with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410315**

SUE attractive, likes walks, gardening, social drinks, looking for male to settle down with, 60's. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410231**

LINDA young 62, smoker, seeking gent, 55-65 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 400521**

68YR old widow, seeking 68-70yr old gent, likes meals out, cosy nights in, lets start New Year with new outlook. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409467**

CATHY happy independent female looking for her soul mate, someone to spend quality time but who also likes their own space. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409909**

VANESSA 32yrs single mum, honest, loving, kind hearted, been hurt in the past enjoys music, reading etc, WLTM my very special Mr Right. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409899**

MARIE slim attractive fun brunette, looking for good times with exciting broadminded male. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409707**

CLAIRE young 39 slim size 10, pretty, outgoing, seeks similar spontaneous male for nights in/out and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409417**

SUE young at heart female, very adventurous and looking for no strings fun with mature man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409251**

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MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477**

JAMES, 45yrs, solvent caring gent, recently divorced seeks genuine lady to wine and dine. Single mums welcome. **Box 4459441 Text only**

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433**

40 year old male, medium build, loving, caring, seeking a woman to have a laugh, storm chasing and walking along the beach to watch sunset on beach. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4332255**

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309**

MALE Half English/Spanish and bi-lingual, I like doing most things and have an adventurous spirit and a soft centre looking for friendship and more. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4351899**

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411147**

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133**

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411127**

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971**

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899**

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755**

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611**

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511**

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441**

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411**

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377**

MALE seeking attractive female for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409189**

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351**

RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343**

ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339**

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191**

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025**

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963**

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961**

CANTERBURY mature male, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697**

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745**

TALL black male, 45, likes meals out, good company, romantic, GSOH, light hearted, seeks easy-going female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409621**

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533**

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CHRIS 52, slim, looking for female, 25-38, slim, 5ft 2ins plus for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408575**

DAVE 50, likes holidays, meals out, socialising, easy going, seeks female 40 plus. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408541**

ADAM 48, single dad, bored, seeking fun and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408421**

DAVE 50, seeks female of similar age for meals out, holidays etc. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408415**

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Medway area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343**

RETIRED male, 66, 6ft 2ins, easy going, GSOH, loyal, loves pets, meals out, life, seeks lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407317**

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855**

STEVE 6ft 4ins, OHAC, seeking relationship, outdoor type, homely, wanting mutual good relationship with sexy woman. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407835**

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355**

71YR old romantic, 6ft, likes life, socialising, reading, strong tea, dogs, smoker but house trained seeks mature lady needing TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407277**

TALL friendly, very light hearted, single 58, seeks pretty woman for LTR, mutual selection of activities and choosing how to spend our time. Croydon. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407147**

BLACK male, looking for 1-2-1 relationship with laid back, understanding female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406221**

YOUNG 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405519**

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372**

RETIRED male 68, 5ft 8ins, considerate, GSOH, easygoing, likes driving, shopping, most music, seeking lady 60-70 for friendship. Ashford. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404589**

DOG lover short of British slim petite lady to maybe get into 1-2-1 relationship and start something new. Smoker welcome, age immaterial. Tunbridge Wells area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404417**

TALL slim male, early 40's, seeks loving female, 29-39 to share the nice things in life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407065**

PROFESSIONAL 45yr old male, one son, bored of the same thing, seeks lady for possible romance. Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 386234**

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Frank's looking sharper than ever

He's back on the road and coming to a theatre near you – Frank Skinner talks about his new UK tour and how he's cleaned up his act

IF there is a finer live comedian than Frank Skinner currently at work in this country, then I have yet to see him (or her).

So it is with great excitement that we welcome him back for his first major national tour in seven years.

He is hitting the road this spring with a big tour of his coruscating new show, Man in a Suit.

And he just can't wait!

Frank has had an immensely successful broadcasting career ranging from The Frank Skinner Show and Fantasy Football League in the 1990s, to today's Room 101 (currently in its third series for BBC1), and his Sony Award-winning Absolute Radio show, which commands 600,000 listeners every week and has had more than 13 million downloads as a podcast.

But it is as a stand-up comedian where he feels most at home.

The live arena gives full rein to Frank's spontaneous wit. It allows him two hours to demonstrate how he cannot help but be funny. He is, without doubt, one of nature's most effortlessly hilarious people.

The critics agree. For instance, The Scotsman says that, "this is a terrific, feel-good show... He can still do it, old Frank. He is warm, relaxed, down-to-earth and properly funny... It is hilarious stuff. Skinner's delivery is so gentle, so friendly, that there is no sense of the judgmental, of ridiculing. And that actually makes it much funnier. This is the work of a seriously skilled stand-up".

The great thing is, Frank is equally funny in person.

An hour-long interview with him is like being treated to a command performance – to an audience of one.

It is a delightful experience spending time in his company, and you emerge at the end of it feeling upbeat and uplifted.

Frank, who has over the years won numerous awards for his stand-up, including the prestigious Perrier Award in 1991, begins by underlining

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« Continued from page 33

how much he is looking forward to returning to the stage.

"It's so different from other stuff. I like the sense that it's not being recorded. Even when you come to record your DVD, no matter how much you fight it, you feel that you're wearing a slightly smaller suit. It feels a lot more restrained.

"So much stuff is recorded these days. Small stand-up clubs will often have a camera at the back of the room, and you never know where the footage will end up.

"In the end, memories will be completely closed down. YouTube has already totally killed the anecdote. It provides anecdotes for

"In the end, memories will be completely closed down. YouTube has already totally killed the anecdote"

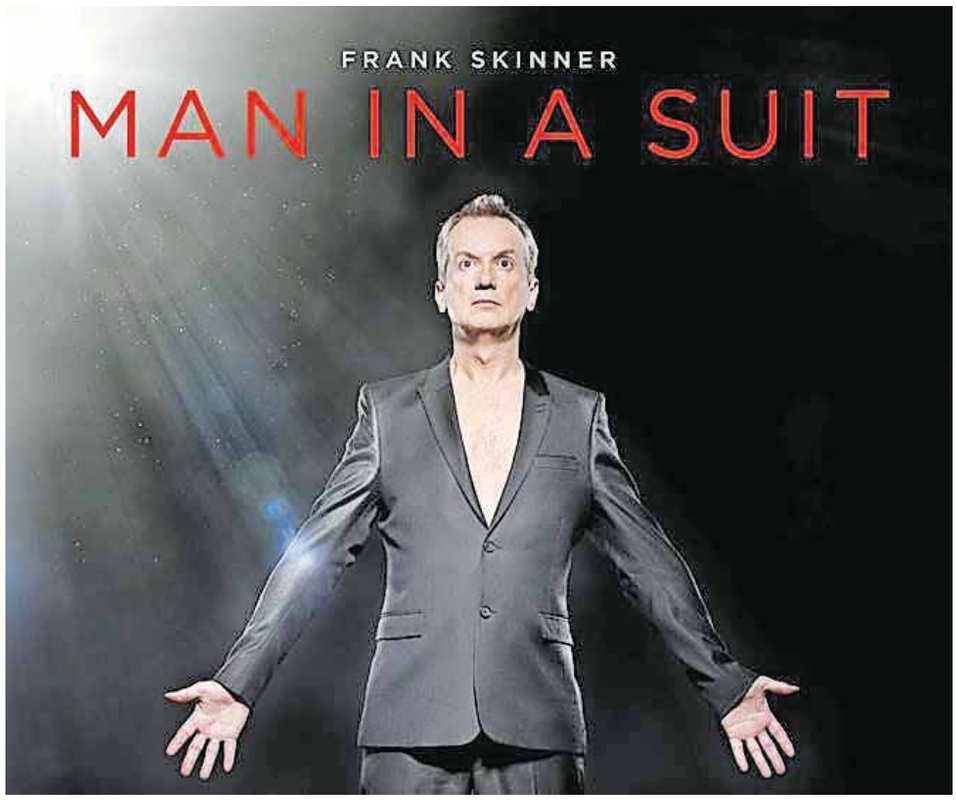
the illiterate: 'Here's a funny thing – look at this!'"

The other aspect about live comedy that Frank revels in is the terrific rapport that he enjoys with his audiences.

"I love interacting with the audience," affirms the comedian, the proud father of a one-year-old son called Buzz.

"When it goes well, suddenly I feel like I'm part of the audience as well. That's very exhilarating.

"Last week a woman in the front row had an American accent, and I asked if she was from the US. She



replied, 'No, I'm from Iraq'. I'd made the wrong-est guess anyone's ever made and my life flashed in front my eyes – but the audience laughed about it for at least a minute.

"Those moments are very precious because they're not repeatable. They happen so quickly that you're not even aware of the process.

"During my last tour, a guy came up to me and told me he had been doing comedy for eight months.

"He said, 'You know when you come back to the audience really quickly – how do you do that?'

"I replied, 'I don't know'.

"'Come on, it would really help me. What difference would it make to you?'

"'I'm honestly not keeping anything from you. It just happens'.

"I don't know how you could rehearse those exchanges – unless you practiced with your partner. But she doesn't always appreciate my comebacks! Anyway, those moments on stage are very pleasurable indeed."

What makes Frank's live work so special is its unalloyed candour. As he ranges over such a varied subjects as relationships, religion, rows with

"When I've strayed from that and tried to write a novel in the third person or sitcoms, they have not been great"

your partner, filth, salty popcorn, Prince Charles, long black leather coats, the yard of ale, giving to the homeless, the Tube and taste, he delivers his material with an admirable sense of honesty.

This makes sense from a comedian whose first autobiography was simply entitled Frank.

"Honesty is vital," reflects the comedian, whose Absolute Radio show was downloaded 2.8 million times last year, making it both Absolute and commercial radio's most successful podcast.

"Everything I do is autobiographical. When I've strayed from that and tried to write a novel in the third person or sitcoms, they have not been great. I'm essentially an autobiographical writer.

"I once read a biography of Jack London. It revealed that he wrote by buying a story from someone and

Continued on page 36 »

Advertiser's Announcement

Bangkok comes to Maidstone this Christmas

The nation's favourite Christmas party organiser, Best Parties Ever, will bring the myths and magic of the Far East to Kent County Showground this festive season.

"One Night in Bangkok" will take guests on a journey amongst tremendous waterfalls, serene fountains and bronze statues. and through the streets of the uniquely atmospheric and exciting city of Bangkok.

Partygoers will be entertained by extraordinary acrobats, Chinese pole and fire performers and aerial dancers, before entering a sumptuous palm lined dining area under the watchful gaze of the giant Buddha.

After a four course dinner the Bangkok bars beckon; there's also a casino, Best Parties Ever's famous dodgems and, of course, dancing!

Best Parties Ever's 2014 party season at Kent County Showground will commence on December 3rd and run until December 20th, with prices starting at £45.00 per head. The price includes: Spectacular Theming and Scenery; Live Entertainment including Acrobats; Performers and Dancers; Superb Four Course Dinner; Dodgems (a small charge applies); Professional Photographer (a small charge applies); Charity Casino including Blackjack and Roulette; State of the Art Disco with Intelligent Lighting; Starlit Ceilings and Professional Set Lighting; Christmas Crackers; Full Event Management; On-Site Security; Free Cloakroom; Free Car Parking and Survivors Breakfast!

One Night in Bangkok – the programme:

7.00pm Bangkok Bars Open

7.45pm Amazing Acrobats

8.15pm Four Course Dinner

8.30pm Sensational Aerial Silks

9.00pm Thai Dancers & Performers

9.30pm Incredible Fire Dance Finale

10.00pm Dodgems, Disco and Casino

12.00am Survivors Breakfast

12.15am Last Orders and Last Rides

12.30am Time to hit the road!

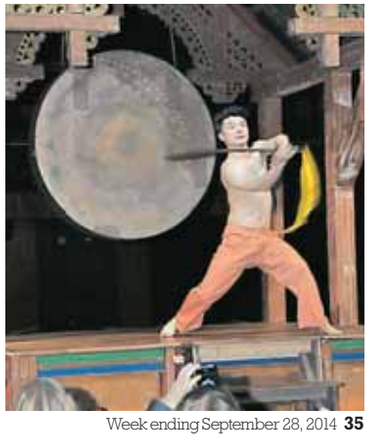
Leading Christmas party specialist Best Parties Ever hosted up to 1,200 guests each night, over 150,000 guests in total, at 20 venues throughout the UK during the 2013 festive season. This year they will be operating in 22 venues across the country.

Best Parties Ever ran its first themed Christmas Party in 1999, since then it has become the industry's leading Christmas party specialist, operating a varied mix of atmospheric themed Christmas parties at affordable prices

Parties are set within a luxurious marquee or structure, the theme of which is changed annually.

Best Parties Ever can accommodate large corporate groups up to 1200 people, smaller group bookings as well as individuals.

For more information call on 0844 499 4040, e-mail sales@bestpartiesever.com or visit www.bestpartiesever.com



« Continued from page 35

then developing that into a novel. His justification was that his gift lay in expression, not invention. I suspect I'm the same."

So just how much of Frank's material in Man in a Suit is lifted directly from his own life?

"You'd be amazed! I embroider very little. I never completely invent anything. I think it would lack conviction if I did. It feels more real when it is true."

One thing that has changed about Frank's act over the years is that it now features far less blue material than it did in the past.

The comedian, who also penned Frank Skinner on the Road, which chronicled his 2007 sell-out return to stand-up, explains that Man in a Suit is merely an account of who he now is.

"There's a bit of filth, but not much. When I do Room 101 or my radio show, I'm very me. I don't feel phoney. I'm very clean because it's eight in the morning.

"David Baddiel said to me recently, 'When I think of 'your funny' off stage, I don't think of you doing knob jokes. I think of you talking about John Updike.' That's more who I am off stage these days.

"I've done a lot of knob jokes in my time, but maybe I've emptied my supply of them now.

"Your comedy should be a reflection of what's in your head, and I just don't think of sex as much as I used to. When you get into a long relationship, sex is no longer the dominant thing."

All the same, 57-year-old Frank adds, "I still have to do a bit of filth on stage. If I didn't, that would be like Bernie Clifton not performing with his ostrich. So I go through a process of negotiation with my audience – 'let me read you some haikus, and I'll trade you that for some knob gags later on.' I think that's a fair deal. I'll talk about Plato, and I'll then give you a knob gag. It's like training a dog: you have to sit while I say my bit, but then I'll reward you with a chocolate biscuit afterwards."

Frank, who had three number one hits alongside David Baddiel and The Lightning Seeds with their football anthem, Three Lions, continues that his current cleaner act mirrors the present state of comedy.

"In the past, people would always laugh at the rude stuff because they were getting something they couldn't get elsewhere. When I did my first tour in 1991, that was certainly true.

"But now 8 out of 10 Cats is much ruder than my stuff was in 1991. So people don't have to go to live comedy to get that anymore. That means I'm able to do more stuff that I like. It's great because it keeps my show fresh.

"When I've done the live show 40 times, I don't feel, 'Oh God, here we go again.' Maybe that's because I'm doing stuff that is not so much on the button anymore."

Frank, who has recently published Dispatches from the Sofa, a collection of columns he wrote for The Times over a two-year period, muses that he is relishing the prospect of this tour so much because it is a very accurate portrait of who he is now.

SITTING COMFORTABLY: Frank Skinner comes across as a warm, likeable man, whether he's on stage or off it

"I'm enjoying this tour more than I did in 2007. Then I was still feeling a strong obligation to be who I was in 1997. I'm never good at playing a version myself.

"I like being me and reflecting where I am at that time.

"That's why I don't like greatest hits albums. I like to hear a particular slice of time and know where a band were when they recorded an album – 'This is where The Kinks were when they brought out Village Green Preservation Society'. Man in a Suit is very much about where I am at the moment."

Frank is also currently preparing to record The Rest is History, a tremendous new six-part Radio 4 comedy discussion show on the subject of history.

The comedian, who recently also really enjoyed co-hosting with Joan Bakewell Sky Arts' fascinating series, Portrait Artist of the Year, comments that, "I like the idea of doing a panel show on Radio 4 because I can say anything as far as cleverness is concerned. If people don't know something, they'll be angry with themselves, rather than me.

"On my Radio 4 comedy, Don't Start, one section was largely based on Androcles and the Lion. That would've been harder to pull off on The One Show. In fact, the last time I was on The One Show, I did a CS Lewis joke and I said to them, 'I bet that's the first time you've had a CS Lewis joke'.

"I thought I'd like to do a panel show where I could talk about anything to do with history. I love history, but I haven't studied it. So I thought, 'I've got two choices – Google or a radio show. Well, I might as well get paid for it!'

"So the aim of the show is to teach me about history – you can listen too if you like! I'm hoping this will be one of those Radio 4 shows that lasts for 50 years and that my son Buzz will present it when I retire!"

Frank closes by returning to the subject of how much is looking forward to performing live once more with Man in a Suit.

"I've always had the showing off gene. I see it now in my son. The other day he did an impression of me doing the impression of Louis Armstrong, and I don't think I've ever been prouder!

"So on stage I want to show off. If the audience are laughing, I want to make them laugh even more. Above all, I really care about the audience having a very good time indeed."

And there is no doubt in my mind that that is exactly they will have.

■ **Man in a Suit is at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Sunday, November 9, at 7.30pm. Phone 01892 530613 or visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.**

■ **On Friday, November 14, it is at The Winter Gardens, Margate, at 7.30pm. Phone 01843 292795 or alternatively you can visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.**

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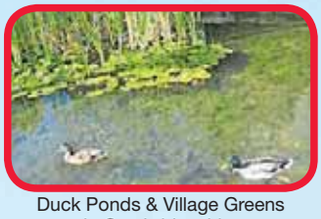

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They're a a funny pair but would they have made Marian laugh?

By Dave Mairs
dave.mairs@archant.co.uk

WHATEVER happened to Robin Hood and Maid Marian? For that matter, whatever happened to Cannon and Ball?

The possible answers to both questions collide on stage in Ha Ha Hood!, the latest parody from the team that brought us Ha Ha Holmes!, Ha Ha Hitler! and Ha Ha Hamlet!.

Aside from the alliteration, the theme is that of a gentle spoof of some of our most treasured characters... Hitler aside.

In Ha Ha Hood! And The Prince Of Leaves, which has already played at Tunbridge Wells and will take in Dartford, Margate and Bromley next month, Robin and Marian are forced back together to once again fight the Sheriff of Nottingham.

It is only fair to point out that Robin and Marian's return to battle comes 10 years after "a messy divorce"... you get the picture.

The pair are joined by old pals Little John and Friar Tuck, both of whom, we are told, are "considerably older and rougher around the edges".

Ha Ha Hood! was created by Ben Langley, who has given himself the plum role of Robin, and he is joined in this jolly romp by Su Pollard, who plays Marian, and the aforementioned Tommy Cannon (both the Sheriff of Nottingham and Little John) and Bobby Ball (Friar Tuck and Guy of Gisborne).

To recap for those of too recent a vintage, The Cannon And Ball Show was a huge Saturday-night hit on the nation's TV screens from 1979-88.

Cannon and Ball's Casino and Plaza Patrol followed, while recent ventures included appearances on I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here! in 2005 and, seven years later, the third celebrity series of Coach Trip.

Ball has been the more regular sight of the two on the small screen, notably in Not Going Out and Mount Pleasant, and he is clearly loving life.

"This is the first Ha Ha! for me and it's really good," he said. "It's a very funny show, if I say so myself. It's an up-to-date farce with lot of cock-ups on stage – it's quick and fast."

So far, so very Cannon and Ball, but it is perhaps not widely known that both comics are devoted Christians.

"I've been a Christian about 28 years," said Ball. "It was in the 80s. I love show business, but it's shallow and I didn't get any peace. I was talking to a chaplain in Bradford and I wanted that peace. My wife became a Christian six months after me."

It took Cannon longer, some six years, but, "seeing the change" in his partner, with whom had fallen out while the pair were at their professional prime, he followed a similar path.

The move to Christianity played a big part in the rebirth of the friendship, which had been broken in what Ball describes as "the pressure-cooker" of show business with the presence of "an entourage" that apparently took more than it gave.

"God gives us our crosses," said Ball, jokingly referring to his partnership with Cannon. "I can see that there's more good than bad in him and we're closer now than ever."

Showbiz has its temptations whatever image you portray or whatever role you play, so how did the lifestyle tally with his faith?

"I didn't find it difficult at all," he said. "I just prayed and I saw my wife as more beautiful every day."

No doubt there are many who wish they could say the same. Bobby Ball might just be on to something.

TWANG! Yes, all you lovers of Cannon and Ball, the braces are still present

■ Ha Ha Hood! And The Prince Of Leaves is at The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, on Sunday, October 5 (phone the ticket office on 01322 220000 or visit orchardtheatre.co.uk). It is then at Theatre Royal Margate on Wednesday, October 8 (phone 01843 292795 or visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com). On Tuesday, October 21, the show is at The Churchill Theatre, Bromley (phone 0844 871 7615 or visit www.atgtickets.com).

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Bentley's is an ideal spot to treat yourself to an evening away from the cooking and washing up without breaking the bank. Equally, the attentive, friendly staff also enjoy welcoming guests for special events and celebrations.

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There is a range of various events held at Oakwood House throughout the year. See what they have to offer by bringing along friends, family or colleagues to one of the exciting dates below.

Wedding Fayre: Sunday, October 12, 11am-3pm
Meet the dedicated wedding coordinators and also local suppliers offering inspirational ideas. Amazing venue discounts available on the day.

Children's Halloween Party: Friday, October 31, midday to 3pm
Bring the kids along for an afternoon of fun, with Funky Footsteps entertaining all the children with dancing and party games. £10 per child aged three to 14.

Howling Halloween Party: Saturday, November 1, 7.30pm-0.30am
This is one for the adults! Enter the old Victorian house this Halloween for a great evening of spooky fun. A two-course hot buffet, Halloween performance and disco for just £23.95 per person.

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There are a range of various events held at Oakwood House throughout the year. See what they have to offer by bringing along friends, family or colleagues to one of the exciting dates below.

Wedding Fayre – Sunday 12 October – 11.00am – 3.00pm
Meet the dedicated wedding coordinators and also local suppliers offering inspirational ideas. Amazing venue discounts available on the day

Children's Halloween Party – Friday 31 October – 12.00pm – 3.00pm
Bring the kids along for an afternoon of fun with 'Funky Footsteps' entertaining all the children with dancing and party games. £10.00 per child aged 3-14.

Howling Halloween Party – Saturday 1 November – 7.30pm – 00.30am
This is one for the adults! Enter the old Victorian house this Halloween for a great evening of spooky fun. A 2-course hot buffet, Halloween performance and disco for just £23.95 per person.

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Book now... for Christmas

The Monster Christmas Ball just keeps getting bigger and better

THE Monster Christmas Ball, now in its fifth year, is taking bookings for the 2014 Christmas party season.

One all-inclusive ticket price includes arrival drinks, Christmas dinner, wine with your meal and a full evening's entertainment including live music, DJ and the Monster Christmas Ball Casino.

All is set within a purpose-built Christmas venue that is available for large group bookings and shared party nights.

Shared group and exclusive large group bookings are available, making the Monster Christmas Ball the ideal destination for your Christmas party this season.

Check the website for full event information or to view our Christmas menu and check details of exclusive travel deals to and from the venue that we have negotiated with our travel partner.

The event is held at The Faversham Showground, which is conveniently located just off the A2/M2/A299 junction, with free parking on site.

■ **The event runs from December 12-20; up-to-date availability can be checked online at www.kentchristmasparty.com or by phoning 01227 701042**

Thorley Taverns are the best place to get the party going!

CHRISTMAS is a great excuse for a party with your friends and family – and Thorley Taverns are the best places to celebrate.

They have the perfect venue for your festive feast at their great inns and hotels in Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

In Broadstairs, the Captain Digby family pub and restaurant overlooks romantic Kingsgate Bay.

It dates back to the 1760s and is named after a nephew of Lord Holland.

The Pavilion in Harbour Street has an enviable situation on picturesque Viking Bay and has hosted many fantastic parties.

Just round the corner is The Tartar Frigate, renowned for its seafood, with a roaring fire in the bar to welcome you in from winter's blast.

A few minutes away in Victoria Parade is The Charles Dickens, named after Broadstairs's most famous resident and which was completely refurbished last year.

Its Copperfields restaurant upstairs has commanding views of the bay.

In Ramsgate you are also spoilt for choice... between the Pegwell Bay Hotel and The Oak Hotel & Restaurant 66.

The Pegwell Bay Hotel, near Ramsgate and overlooking Pegwell Bay, won the Pride of Thanet award in 2011.

It has everything you need for a perfect Christmas party, including dinner and dancing and the option of an overnight stay.

The Oak Hotel & Restaurant 66 is in the heart of Ramsgate and overlooks the Royal Harbour.

Again, you can stay overnight and have a dance if your party has a minimum of 30 people.

As you would expect from Thorley Taverns, all food is top-notch and incredible value for money, with prices starting from as little as £19.95 a head for a three-course meal including starter, traditional roast, fish or vegetarian option and pudding.

For more details, contact each venue. Book now to avoid disappointment!

■ **Thorley Taverns: www.thorleytaverns.co.uk**

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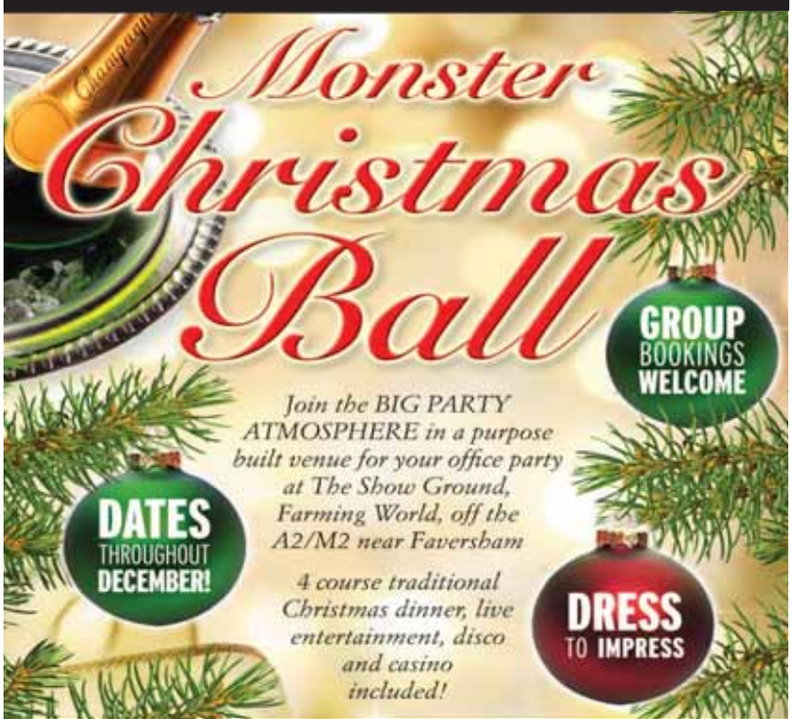

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Book now... for Christmas

L e a e Lympne Hotel and Gardens

PORT Lympne Mansion Hotel and Gardens have announced an exciting offer aimed at guests looking for a unique and luxurious getaway this festive season.

Available from November 1 until December 21, guests can enjoy an overnight stay in the opulent Mansion Hotel and a welcoming glass of bubbles on arrival.

A sumptuous two-course festive feast, including a glass of wine per person, will be served for dinner, while breakfast the following morning will be a two-course affair with choices including a full English, Continental or even an Indian kedgeree, inspired by Sir Philip Sassoon.

Originally designed as a holiday retreat for the rich and famous, the boutique Mansion Hotel, nestled at the heart of Port Lympne Reserve, has six lavishly-furnished bedrooms and four dramatically-decorated reception rooms that reflect the past of the historic building.

In other news, the Port Lympne Mansion Hotel will also be offering festive afternoon teas available on Sunday 7 and Sunday 14 December at just £13 per person.

Meanwhile, across the reserve, the multi-award-winning Livingstone Lodge is set to open its doors as a restaurant with an African twist as the popular dining experiences return for 2014.

On selected dates throughout November and December, dinner guests can enjoy a guided

night safari through the African Experience... 100 acres of Kentish savannah, alive with African animals, before arriving at the Livingstone Lodge Laapa to enjoy a five-course African-themed buffet.

To take advantage of the Bubbles and Baubles Mansion Hotel offer or enjoy a festive afternoon tea, please call 0844 842 4647 or email info@aspinallfoundation.org.

To experience the Livingstone Lodge African-themed dining evening and safari, please phone 0844 855 0274.

■ **For further information on festive offers at Port Lympne Reserve please visit www.aspinallfoundation.org/shortbreaks**

Just party on d down at Mercure Maidstone and then stay a night

IT'S difficult to think of anywhere better to hold your Christmas party than at Mercure Maidstone, Great Danes Hotel.

Whether you're looking for a festive-themed getaway, delicious dining with all the trimmings or celebrating in style with your friends and family, we've got everything for the perfect Christmas under one roof!

Sure you can party, but why not arrange to stay the night?

With comfortable, welcoming rooms, you'll only have a short walk after your celebrations and a tasty breakfast the following morning!

■ **For further information and to book, simply phone the Christmas co-ordinator on 0844 8159045, or you can visit www.mercuremaidstone.co.uk/christmas**

BUBBLES & BAUBLES FESTIVE BREAKS

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Enjoy a festive break at the Port Lympne Mansion Hotel in Kent with the amazing value 'Bubbles and Baubles' short break offer.

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Book now... for Christmas

The Lodge at Prince's offers a venue that's genuinely special

FOR something extra-special at Christmas party time, try out The Lodge at Prince's on east Kent's glorious golfing coastline.

It really is a very special place and you'll feel a million dollars as you roll up to this most wonderful of venues.

Groups of any size are welcome for festive party nights... and what a bargain awaits!

A three-course dinner and disco party can be yours for just £26.50 per person. And, incredibly, the party organiser gets to stay for free when a group of 12 or more is involved!

Indeed, all the guests can stay after the superb party, taking advantage of the special bed & breakfast rate of £35 per person based on two sharing a standard twin or double room.

What is there not to like about this extraordinary place? It will cater for your every party need.

■ **Phone 01304 611118 or alternatively visit www.princesgolfclub.co.uk**

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The impressive four-star Marriott hotel is set in 200 acres of ancient deer parkland with 120 bedrooms.

Its festive facilities include banqueting for up to 250 guests at its site in Maidstone.

Ideally located off junction 8 of the M20 and just a 30-minute drive from London, this Christmas it is offering 'join in party nights' or 'December celebratory lunches' that can be tailor-made with packages to suit individual group needs.

Beyond its party facilities, it is able to cater for conferences with up to 250 people.

The hotel's Thurnham Suite can accommodate up to 160 people with a dance floor and private bar. The Bearsted Suite and marquee, which take up to 120 guests, are perfect for more relaxed smaller parties and offer stunning views over the wildlife pond and golf course.

The hotel's extensive facilities include an 18-hole Championship golf course, leisure club, indoor pool and spa.

With a dedicated team of party planners on hand, the hotel has placed a significant effort into making sure that 2014's Christmas celebrations prove to be a real treat.

At Tudor Park, an enjoyable Christmas and a very happy New Year is waiting for everyone.

■ **Visit www.marriott.co.uk or phone 01622 734334**

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TASTY PICKINGS: Some of the county's finest food producers will be selling their wares at the annual Broadstairs Food Festival from October 3-5

Bake-off star joins celebration of county's top food producers

Local celebrity to join throng waiting to descend on Broadstairs Food Festival

IT'S without question one of the highlights of the year for lovers of food and drink across the county...

Yes, the Broadstairs Food Festival is almost upon us!

From Friday to Sunday, October 3-5, the festival's celebration of Kentish produce will have foodies from across the county believing they have arrived somewhere close to paradise.

The idyllic setting of Broadstairs, of course, only enhances the whole experience.

Festival director Jo Scott said: "We continue to bring you a feast of local and regional food – and drink.

"We actively seek out producers and suppliers who share our passion for quality and flavour – from handmade cheeses to artisan breads, preserves, pies, pickles and pastries. Everything will be brimming with flavour.

"Our producers are passionate about their products and are only too happy to explain why good, local food really matters.

"It is not just the low food miles – it's about sustaining a regional economy, reawakening an interest in home-cooking and a getting in touch with Kent's rich food heritage as the Garden of England."

Entry to the festival is free for all three days, although there are special events for which you must book.

The gala dinner at East Kent College before the festival itself has sold out, so you'll have to be quicker next year for that one, but fear not as there is plenty more to tempt discerning visitors.

Among this cornucopia of delights are a sherry master-class with sherry tastings and tapas at Albarino in Albion Street on Wednesday, October 1 (£35 per person; phone 01843 600991); a festival supper at Wyatt & Jones in Harbour Street on Thursday, October 2 (£35; 01843 865126); and a Champagne afternoon at which you will be welcomed with a glass of Champagne, feasted with glorious food and offered the service of a complimentary bar with a good selection of Continental and Kent wines and ales "in a delightfully select area"... all afternoon on Friday, October 3 (£60; jo@broadstairsfoodfestival.org.uk).

One very special feature is the children's cookery workshops on Saturday and Sunday, October 4-5. These are held at the Queens Road Baptist Church with Hilary Askew of the Chequers Cookery School and restaurant in Deal (refundable £5 deposit per booking; 01304 362288).

No festival of such magnitude would be complete without a splash of celebrity and here it will be provided by Steven Edwards, head chef at South Lodge Hotel in Horsham and 2013 winner of Master Chef, who will be in the chefs' theatre on Sunday, October 5.

STAR TURN: Chetna Makan from Great Britsh Bake Off

There is also a sprinkling of local celebrity stardust courtesy of Chetna Makan, who has just reached the semi-final of BBC1's Great British Bake Off.

She had already been named star baker in a previous round by Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood with her caramel confection, causing her to punch the air in joy.

Named the Flavour Queen of the series, Makan has pleased the judges with her innovative approach to baking.

"Traditionally we use a lot of spices, so this is like home cooking," she said on receiving her Flavour Queen accolade.

Festival director Scott said: "We are so lucky to have Chetna right here on our doorstep.

"Her enthusiasm is really infectious, so we are thrilled to say she will be the first demonstrator in our chefs' theatre."

Makan will be appearing in the theatre on Friday, October 3, with a baking demonstration, followed by a Q&A session, so if you would like to know what it is like to be a GBBO contestant, here's your perfect opportunity...

■ **Broadstairs Food Festival runs from Friday to Sunday, October 3-5 (10am-6pm Friday and Saturday and 10am-5pm Sunday), in Victoria Gardens and Promenade.**

» For more food and drink articles pick up a copy of this month's KENT LIFE

Here's a Chinese restaurant to really breathe fire in your belly

Dragon Inn

Location: Minster

By **David Mairs**

MINSTER is well served with places to eat. A brasserie, an 'English' restaurant, a fish-and-chips emporium, an Indian, a kebab-cum-pizza house, three pubs serving food and two Chinese eateries. Yes, the food-lover in this large village near Ramsgate is so spoilt for choice that he need never venture up the hill to the McDonald's abutting the petrol station.

Living close by, I am familiar with most of these venues but not to the point that I had noticed the Chinese restaurant and take-away (the other is solely a take-away) was entitled Dragon Inn, a name that might lead the unknowing to suspect it was in fact a hostelry of some description.

No matter, having had a number of take-aways from here over the years, it was time to sit down and eat in. It is, of course, in such circumstances that a restaurant really has to earn its stripes... not that the take-away experience should be understated.

The exterior is not as sumptuous as it might be, while inside the surrounds are far from spectacular but they are homely with a pleasantly welcoming feel.

I visited with a friend on a weekday evening, the place hosting a healthy smattering of diners without being full to bursting... an ideal number, in short.

We got our meal under way with mixed hors d'ouvres (spare ribs, prawn toast, mini rolls, satay chicken, seaweed and butterfly king prawn), together with aromatic crispy duck along with its attendant spring onions, cucumbers, hoi sin sauce and pancakes.

Fall here and there was to be no getting up – a Chinese restaurant has to get its crispy-duck appetiser right or the whole experience is doomed.

Happily, this delightful dish was done to perfection. Everything as it should be and plenty of the constituent parts for both of us.

Suitably fired up for what was to follow, we chose five main dishes to share and two portions of special fried rice.

Quick-fried beef with garlic and spring onions was first on the team-sheet and to this we added roast duck with green peppers and black-bean sauce, king-prawn curry, Szechuan king prawn in hot-bean sauce and seafood special with mixed vegetables.

A handsome platter, to be sure, and accompanied by a couple of beers and a bottle of good white wine. All was eaten and all savoured.

Vegetables were crisp and the various meats busting with flavour. With both of us having endured poor Chinese meals in recent weeks, our faith in this potentially delightful cuisine was restored.

The Dragon Inn menu has few, if any, surprises. It is much what you would expect from a Chinese restaurant, but the thing is that it does it well.

And that, whatever type of food you're eating, is everything.

■ **Dragon Inn**
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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

KCC leaving us in the dark, yet again

FURTHER to your article about street lighting being switched off, darker mornings have made the lack of street lighting in Kent even more dangerous.

Now schoolchildren and college students will be setting out in darkness or near darkness.

The morning and evening mists this week have also meant the few lights that do remain on cannot be seen so clearly.

Kent County Council has once again shown utter disregard for the public view on this subject and put finances over safety.

Judith Davies, Deal

Nothing to fear with money saver

IS there not a danger with the switching off of street lights debate that the fear of crime is merely that?

And that actually it is a sensible step which not only saves money but also cuts down on the light pollution which pours into our skies day in, day out?

K Oldfield, Gravesend

No grey area when it comes to crime

CRIMINALS are going to break into homes whether there are lots of lights illuminating their streets or not.

Some properties will simply be targeted because they look like they'll have plenty of items the criminal can easily sell on.

It is probably a mistake to assume that any crime in an area where lights have been switched off is as a direct consequence.

The police figures for those areas will make fascinating reading.

Lee Penfold, Tonbridge

Defectors least of Lib Dem worries

DR Bullion (KoS, 'Cough up cost for election councillor') should look at his own party's performance before suggesting a by-election is called in Cowden and Hever.

In all of the district council elections held in the ward in the last 11 years, not once have the Liberal Democrats put up a candidate.

Before Dr Bullion complains about a councillor's defection, perhaps he should ask why his party has failed to engage in the electoral process in Cowden and Hever during those past 11 years?

Peter Stevens, Ukip election agent, West Malling

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Drivers blindsided by threat of road pricing

AS we approach next year's General Election, it is worth recalling a promise made at the Conservative Party conference in 2009.

We were told that it was time to say "enough is enough" on fixed speed cameras, as they were not the best way to make our roads safe. We were promised a switch to better alternatives.

Not only is that promise unfulfilled, but the Government has kept the cameras going through revenue from lucrative speed awareness courses.

A recent opinion poll showed two-thirds of drivers were unaware they pay around £50 billion a year in taxes, but only about a fifth is spent back on roads.

Yet government is looking to raise even more money out of drivers.

It accepted a report that proposed hiving off England's main highways to profiteers, bringing the threat of road pricing. The almost unknown Infrastructure Bill quietly paves the way for this.

Our roads have been paid for several times over and belong to the public.They are not for sale or something that just falls short of that.

The last government backed down after 1.8 million people signed our petition against road pricing. I urge readers to ask their MP to oppose the Bill – enough is enough.

Brian Macdowall, Alliance of British Drivers, Herne Bay

Road or rail, but problem the same

WHILE not totally unsympathetic to getting more long-distance HGVs off the road and onto rail, as expressed by Martin Whybrow of the Green Party (KoS column, last week), he seems to have evaded one important point.

Once the goods having arrived by rail, they then need transferring to trucks, so this means marshalling yards. While he objects to a lorry park, would he welcome some vast rail freight terminus that would have to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

I seem to remember in 2009 a similar scheme was mooted around the Maidstone area and these pages were filled with people and 'green' organisations all objecting.

Also, this would only work if similar facilities were available in other countries and close to where the goods are manufactured.

So Mr Whybrow, where is the best place to put these marshalling yards?

Your answers please, sir...

Terry Hudson, Whitstable

Bleeding hearts, not bleeding truth

I READ last week's ill-informed letter from Andrew South in Dymchurch.

He is like many of the bleeding-heart brigade who will not accept the truth that immigrants, especially illegal immigrants, do not benefit the county.

There is no doubt some immigrants have had a positive effect on the economy and to the pockets of rich land and factory owners: those who have a good work ethic.

But what do the rest bring with them? Nothing.

Douglas Malem, Sittingbourne

Barnes' job makes a mockery of force

I HEAR the police are going to have 'police cams' to record their working day: I bet Ann Barnes is worried she will have to wear one?

With her past performance, how can she justify her salary of £80,000 when a constable on the front line gets a quarter of that?

I wish I had a nothing job that pays £80,000 with my homework self-appraised.

The job may be justified, but this is a classic case of the wrong person in the wrong job.

Steve Bullers, via email

Manston twist is hardly a surprise

FROM the moment it became apparent Ann Gloag was going to close down Manston, it was obvious to many of us what future lay in store.

As a prime site, with good views and strong transport links, it was only ever going to be a matter of time before it became a housing site. The only question now will be quite how many. I bet the council is rubbing its hands in glee.

Jon Turner, via email

Finally someone has seen sense

I AM sure you will have plenty of people writing in moaning about the fate of Manston, so allow me to be the sole voice of reason.

As an airport, it never worked. It just lost money and employed very few. It had to be turned into something more viable - even if, disappointingly, that means a housing estate.

Tom Cox, via email

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles:

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

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Horses at Westerham

by **Martin Cordrey, from Maidstone**

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The Fourmost

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Over 40s only

Quote SS11-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 28 November, 2014

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INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Entertainment
- 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
- 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - upgrades available
- Car ferry crossing worth £45

Warner Sinah Warren Hotel, Hayling Island

Tribute to Abba

£10pp Deposit

Adults Only

Quote SW12-KOS

2 nights half board • Friday 19 December, 2014

With stunning views over Langstone Harbour and peaceful spots for relaxing, this gem on Hayling Island, near Portsmouth, has something for everyone. Relax or swim a few lengths in the heated indoor pool; enjoy the fun day-time activities then sitback and be entertained each night. Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays is nearby and great for Christmas shopping.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray

- 2 breakfasts & 2 dinners
- Full entertainment programme including a tribute to Abba

Note: This is not a GN private party.

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Carry on New Year Party

FREE Drinks 6pm to Midnight

Rock Stewart & Ultimate Elton

Mamma Mia! the Movie

Abba Tribute Band

£10pp Deposit

Over 40s only

Quote BE1-CON-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 9 January, 2015

Our private party extends the New Year festivities and takes us on a trip down memory lane at our favourite Warner hotel. Enjoy a gala New Year's Eve party with countdown to midnight and great entertainment.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Entertainment
- 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
- 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - hotel upgrades available with rooms in main building from £259pp
- Car ferry crossing worth £45

Isle of Wight Come Dancing Party

FREE Drinks 6pm to Midnight

Dance Tuition Social Dancing Gala Ball

Featuring UK Ten Dance Champions Richard Still & Morgan Hemphill

Entertainment

£10pp Deposit

Over 40s only

Quote BE1-DAN-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 9 January, 2015

Dance fans who enjoy ballroom and latin dancing will love our popular Come Dancing Party, running alongside the Carry on New Year Party. You will enjoy dance demonstrations by UK Ten Dance Champions Richard Still and Morgan Hemphill, as well as tuition, a Gala Ball, entertainment and much more.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Dance tuition, social dancing & a gala ball
- Entertainment
- 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
- 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - hotel upgrades available with rooms in main building from £309pp
- Car ferry crossing worth £45

Swinging Sixties Seaside Party - Warner Corton, Suffolk Coast

FREE Drinks 6pm to Midnight

The Fortunes

Union Gap

Frankie Valli Tribute

£10pp Deposit

Over 40s only

Quote CW2-KOS

3 nights half board-plus • Friday 6 February, 2015

Join us for a private party that takes a trip down memory lane at Warner Corton, on the Suffolk Coast near Lowestoft. Enjoy live entertainment from The Fortunes, Union Gap, a Tribute to Frankie Valli, plus Free Drinks every night and lots of nostalgic fun.

INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

- Entertainment
- 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts
- 3 nights en-suite **CHALET** - upgrades available from £234pp

Bournemouth Spring Party - Suncliff Hotel

99p Drinks 6pm to 9pm

Enter-tainment Each Night

£10pp Deposit

Over 40s only

Quote BM3-KOS

4 nights half board-plus • Monday 2 March, 2015

Join us for a spring break at one of Bournemouth's premier 3 star hotels, The Suncliff, situated on the resort's prestigious East Cliff within easy walking distance of all its attractions. The Suncliff has an indoor leisure complex with a heated pool, sauna, mini gym and squash courts with viewing gallery (small charge applies). You will also enjoy a 99p bar and live entertainment every evening.

INCLUDED: 99p bar 6-9pm nightly - house beers and spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

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- 4 breakfasts and 4 dinners
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driving

By Matt Joy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

LITTLE GEM: If you're looking for thrills and spills, then Fiat's Abarth 500 certainly ticks all the boxes: a lot of car all wrapped up in a small package

Abarth 595 Competitzione

Price: £18.315
Engine: 1.4-litre unit producing 158bhp and 170lb/ft of torque
Transmission: Five-speed manual gearbox driving the front wheels
Performance: Top speed 130mph, 0-62mph, 7.4 seconds
Economy: 43.5mpg combined
Emissions: 155g/km of CO2

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Pocket rocket living up to its proud heritage

Take one Fiat 500, then add a crazy turbocharged engine, a spicy bodykit and wait for the fireworks to begin…

FIAT'S evergreen 500 has been turned into a fire-breathing hot hatch before by legendary firm Abarth, but the latest version is now a permanent addition to the range.

Available in semi-sensible Turismo or 100 per cent barmy Competitzione guise tested here, the Abarth 500 is not for the faint of heart.

There's a turbocharged 1.4-litre petrol unit up front that offers a healthy 158bhp, but more significantly 170lb ft of torque.

The exterior wears a seriously tough bodykit and gorgeous alloy wheel options, while there's stiffer suspension and uprated brakes too.

There's also some interesting touches inside too, such as the attractive metal-topped gearlever.

It's hard not to love the Abarth 500's looks, even though from some angles it is almost comically pumped up. From a rational point of view it has the proportions of a roller-skate, with a short wheel-base, big wheels and minimal ride height, but it just makes you want to get in and drive it.

Any notion that the standard 500 is a car 'just for girls' is dismissed in a flash when it's turned into an Abarth. Those in the know recognise the badge and those that don't are intrigued.

Don't forget the Abarth is still a city car, however much its transformation has rendered it better suited to the open road. So up front there is a respectable amount of space for adults, but the driving position is better suited to those under six feet in height. In the rear it's kids or adults who are willing rather than pure luxury.

This particular 595 had the optional leather bucket seats, which are terrifically supportive and look superb. In fact it's very easy to carried away with the options list, especially when the end result is so much fun.

Drive the 595 in the manner it deserves and you'll revel in the gloriously torquey engine, the hilariously raucous exhaust note and the way in which it dives into bends with limitless enthusiasm.

It's a car that works best when you chuck it about rather than use a delicate hand. Do so and it's a complete riot, as well as remarkably quick.

Turn down the wick and it's a little more like hard work. The great handling comes from the stiff suspension which means bumps are felt rather than heard, but it's a worthwhile trade-off.

There's actually quite a bit of competition at this price level, and on the one hand the 595 Competitzione is far from cheap. However, it does come with a lot of kit too; items like Xenon headlights and the glorious exhaust system are all standard. Go mad with the options list and you can break the £20,000 mark.

If you can live with the ride quality then the girl about town who wants a 500 more stylish than anyone else would be happy with the Abarth 595 – although they may prefer the Turismo model.

The other ideal buyer for the 595 is anyone who wants a small weekend toy to blast away the cobwebs that can also be used in normal circumstances, at least some of the time.

This car summed up in a single word: unhinged

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Dacia Logan MCV = from **£6,995***
Logan MCV shown is a Lauréate 1.2 16V 75 from £8,995

Dacia Sandero Stepway = from **£8,395***

New Dacia Duster = from **£9,495***
New Duster shown is a Lauréate dCi 110 4x2 from £13,495

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Dacia range are: Urban 27.2 (10.4)-65.7 (4.3); Extra Urban 40.3 (7)-80.7 (3.5); Combined 35.3 (8)-74.3 (3.8). The official CO_2 emissions are 185-99g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO_2 may vary according to driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

*Prices shown include delivery to dealer, number plates, 20% VAT, 12-month Government road fund licence and £55 first registration fee. Prices shown are Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Prices, which apply to new Dacia vehicles when ordered by 30 September 2014. Cars shown have optional metallic paint, available at an additional £495.

Cut-price crossover with the popular touch on right path

Dacia may not be the trendiest name on the forecourt, but its price tags are a convincing argument. Here we put the Sandero Stepway through its paces...

DESPITE being a brand defined by the affordability of its cars, Dacia understands the need for models that give the people what they want. The Sandero Stepway is one of those.

Based on the Sandero hatchback, the Stepway is more of a crossover type car, riding higher and with a handful of off-roader styling cues to give a more rugged look.

Sales in this sector of the market have been ballooning for the last few years and Dacia would be daft not to get in on the act.

The sub-range is almost identical to that of the Sandero hatch. It's in the company's interests to share parts, platforms and equipment as much as possible, allowing a cheaper price to then be passed on to the consumer.

There are turbocharged 0.9-litre petrol and 1.5-litre diesel engine options with two trim levels, so the Stepway does without the entry-level engine and trim options you can get in the ordinary Sandero.

Tested here is the Stepway Laureate 1.5 dCi; the priciest Sandero variant at £10,995.

For around £1,000 less you can have the gutsy and frugal 898cc turbocharged petrol TCe, which makes it the soundest financial bet for most buyers.

Either way, a lot of people will go for Laureate spec for its massive value for money.

As well as the 40mm ride height increase over the common-or-garden Sandero which improves accessibility and gives a better view of the road ahead, buyers get smart-looking roof rails, an in-built colour sat-nav system, cruise control, a speed limiter and reverse-parking sensors. Not the sort of things you normally expect on a sub-£11,000 runabout, but all of them very welcome.

BARGAIN: Dacia's crossover effort builds on brand's bargain reputation

The 89bhp diesel engine is equally impressive on the value front. Based on the cheaper of the two Renault-Nissan alliance small-capacity units (there's also a 1.6 in the group), it produces ample power and only 105g/km of CO_2, which although not hitting the tax-free heights of some of its costlier Renault cousins is still very impressive – and very cheap to run.

One of the parts shared between all Sandero models including the Stepway is the rev counter, which has no red zone and extends past 7,000rpm. The diesel can't reach those engine speeds but pulls well between 1,900rpm and 3,500rpm.

For general biffing around town or country the diesel Stepway is a thoroughly amiable little partner, happily negotiating steep hills and displaying fine cruising credentials. The only issue is louder-than-average wind noise around the front screen and A-pillars.

Its five-speed gearbox is a bit notchy when locating a new cog and if you place your hand on it the gear lever can feel wobbly. It's not too noticeable during normal gearshifts though, and the Stepway is a car for people who are deeply unconcerned by relatively inconsequential things like that anyway.

Although on the face of it the Stepway isn't the list-price-bargain that the entry-level Sandero hatchback is, when you look at the equipment you get versus its no-frills rivals, you'd have to be mad not to take a closer look.

Dacia Sandero Stepway Laureate 1.5 dCi

Price: £10,995

Engine: 1.5-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel producing 89bhp and 162lb/ft.

Transmission: Five-speed manual gearbox driving the front wheels

Performance: Top speed 104mph, 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds

Economy: 70.6mpg combined

Emissions: 105g/km

FirstGEAR
Motoring news

'No' vote fuels fall

THE NO vote in Scotland could result in a 2p-a-litre dip in fuel prices at the pumps, according to the AA.

Before the referendum result, the AA said the uncertainty on voting intentions had meant a dip in the value of sterling.

This, in turn, had led to a slight rise in the price of petrol and diesel for UK consumers despite a fall in oil prices.

But with the pound already rising following the referendum, the AA is now confident of better fuel deals for UK motorists.

AA president Edmund King said: "We saw last week that Scotland's support for staying in the Union boosted the pound.

"If the pound remains strong we should see reductions in pump prices.

"We believe that if the pound stabilises at these higher levels we should be seeing at least a 2p-per-litre reduction in pump prices."

The AA had earlier said that pre-referendum uncertainty had led to petrol going up from an average of 128.72p a litre on August 31, to 129.23p a litre in mid-September. Diesel, too, had risen, with the average cost going from 133.02p a litre on August 31 to an average of 133.44p in mid-September.

The motoring organisation said had the pound held its mid-August value, the average cost of petrol would have now been around 127.5p a litre – the lowest since January 5, 2011.

Still a bargain buy

DACIA'S popular Duster has been refreshed, with the affordable SUV gaining a package of styling and trim upgrades for the 2015 model.

However, true to its maker's no-frills approach, Dacia has stated that there will be no increase in the brand's no-nonsense, "shockingly affordable" pricing.

The line-up continues to consist of two and four-wheel-drive models based on three trim levels – Access, Ambiance, Laureate – and two engines.

Prices start from £9,495 for the two-wheel-drive entry-level model and under £11,495 for the four-wheel-drive equivalent.

New for 2015 is a more stylish chrome front grille and all versions now have 'Duster' branded roof bars.

13 Plate
Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 SE 5dr

Representative Example

60 Monthly Payments	Deposit	Cash Price
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Amount of Credit	**Total Amount Payable**	**Representative**
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THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (THE DISTRICT OF SHEPWAY) (FOLKESTONE WEST CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE) (NO 2) ORDER 2012 (AMENDMENT NO 1) (BATHURST ROAD, BROADFIELD ROAD EXTENSION) ORDER 2013

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes the above Order under Sections 1, 2, 32, 44, 45 and 124 of and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order proposes to implement new parking restrictions in the following streets:

ROADS IN FOLKESTONE

Zone B permit holders only [9am – 11am Mondays to Fridays, both days inclusive]

- Herdson Road
- Wellfield Road
- Broadfield Crescent
- Broadfield Road, from Shorncliffe Road to Ravenlea Road
- Ravenlea Road

Zone B permit holders parking places [9am – 11am Mondays to Fridays, both days inclusive]

Bathurst Road; Both sides, from a point 11.2 metres east of its junction with Coolinge Lane to a point 12.5 metres south west of its junction with Baldric Road; North East side, from a point 12 metres south east of its junction with Baldric Road to a point 16.5 metres south west of its junction with Bodenham Road; South West side, from a point 33 metres south east of its junction with Baldric Road, to a point 16.5 metres south west of its junction with Bodenham Road; Both sides, from a point 14.2 metres north east of its junction with Bodenham Road to a point 26 metres south west of its junction with Welson Road; South side, from a point 18 metres east of its junction with Turketel Road, east for a distance of 26.3 metres; North side, from a point 18 metres east of its junction with Turketel Road, east for a distance of 35 metres; **Shorncliffe Road;** South west side, from a point 42 metres north west of its junction with Bathurst Road, north west for a distance of 30 metres; North East side, from a point 12 metres south east of its junction with Broadfield Crescent to a point 15 metres north west of its junction with Broadfield Road; North East side, from a point 15 metres south east of its junction with Broadfield Road, south east for a distance of 64 metres; North east side from a point 15 metres north west of its junction with Ravenlea Road, north west for a distance of 52 metres; south west side, from a point 14 metres west of its junction with Ravenlea Road, to a point 24 metres south east of its junction with Bathurst Road.

Prohibitions of waiting [at any time]

Bathurst Road; both sides from its junction with Coolinge Lane, east for a distance of 11.2 metres; North West and North East sides, from a point 12 metres south west of its junction with Baldric Road to point 12 metres south east of that junction; South west and south east sides, from a point 12 metres south west of its junction with Baldric Road to a point 32 metres south east of that junction; both sides from a point 16.5 metres south west of its junction with Bodenham Road, to a point 14.2 metres north; north west side, from its junction with Shorncliffe Road, south west for a distance of 29.5 metres; **Shorncliffe Road;** South west side, from a point 42 metres north west of its junction with Bathurst Road, to a point 24 metres south east of that junction; North East side, from a point 32 metres north west of its junction with Bathurst Road to a point 12.5 metres south east of that junction; North East side, from its junction with Ravenlea Road, west for a distance of 14 metres; West side, from its junction with Herdson Road; **Broadfield Road;** Both sides, from its junction with Shorncliffe Road, north for a distance of 19 metres; both sides, from a point 14 metres east of its junction with Ravenlea Road, to a point 14 metres west of that junction; **Ravenlea Road;** Both sides, from a its junction with Broadfield Road, south for a distance of 14 metres; both sides, from its junction with Shorncliffe Road, north for a distance of 19 metres

A copy of the proposed Order, a copy of any Orders which may be affected by it, and a statement of the council's reasons for proposing the Order can be inspected at the Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY, during normal office hours.

If you have any views about the proposed Order you should make them in writing to (Zone A), Parking Services, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY. Or email TRO.Consultation@shepway.gov.uk stating "Zone A" in the subject title.

We must receive any representations before 5pm on Monday 20th October 2014 for them to be considered. For legal reasons we cannot accept representations over the phone or in person.

If you have any questions concerning the Order or require further information please contact Shepway District Council (Transportation Department), Council Offices, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY (01303 853240 during normal office hours).

This notice is published by Shepway District Council on behalf of Kent Highway Services, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX. Kent Highway Services is part of Kent County Council.

Folkestone
Hythe & Romney Marsh
Shepway District Council
www.shepway.gov.uk

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/1003/SH - Ivy Cottage From Bunkers Hill To Canterbury Road Wingmore Canterbury Kent - Erection of detached granny annexe to replace existing stables.

Y14/0258/SH - 43 Sandgate Road Folkestone Kent CT20 1RZ - Listed building consent for works to building

Y14/0892/SH - Tourney Hall High Street Lydd Romney Marsh Kent - Erection of a detached dwellinghouse with parking and landscaping

Y14/0980/SH - 42 Sandgate High Street Sandgate Folkestone Kent CT20 3AP - Change of use of ground floor premises from cafe (Class A3) to residential (Class C3), together with the enclosure of the rear courtyard area and other external alterations

Y14/0979/SH - 42 Sandgate High Street Sandgate Folkestone Kent CT20 3AP - Listed building consent for the partial enclosure of the rear courtyard area and other internal and external alterations in order to facilitate the change of use of the ground floor premises from cafe to residential

Y14/1048/SH - Cartref North Street New Romney Kent TN28 8DR - Erection of a part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension following removal of existing side extension, together with erection of front porch extension.

Y14/1050/SH† - Hythe Lawn Tennis Club Twiss Road Hythe Kent - Works to two Elm trees situated within a conservation area comprising removal of south facing laterals to provide 2 metre clearance from adjacent lighting column (T1) and removal of lowest limb overhanging tennis club car park (T2)

Y14/1042/SH# - Gun Cottage Fairfield Road New Romney Kent TN28 8HY - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: Felling of one Bay, one Holm Oak (C) and three Yews; 1.5 metre reduction of a Fig; 3 metre reduction in height, 2 metre reduction of laterals and 4 metre crown lift of two Holm Oaks (A and B); 2 metre overall crown reduction of four Hollys and 3 metre reduction in height, 1.5 metre reduction of laterals of a Eucalyptus together with the reduction of road side limb by 2.5 metres and removal of lower limb on south side

Y14/1043/SH - Endeavour Sussex Road New Romney Kent TN28 8HL - Crown reduction of a Yew tree situated within a conservation area comprising 2 metre reduction in height and 1.5 metre reduction of laterals

Y14/1041/SH - Broadacre North Street New Romney Kent TN28 8DR - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: Felling of two Conifers (T3 and T4) and four Poplars (T6, T7, T8 and T9), followed by the planting of replacement trees; 1.5 metre overall crown reduction and 2 metre crown lift of two Yews (T1 and T5) and 15% crown thin and 3 metre crown lift of a Magnolia

Y14/1023/SH* - 5 Canterbury Road Hawkinge Folkestone Kent CT18 7JA - Erection of two detached dwellings with accommodation in the roof space, together with the erection of two detached double garages, creation of a vehicular access from The Oaks and a pedestrian access from Canterbury Road

Y14/1000/SH - Ivy Cottage Wingmore Canterbury Kent CT4 6LS - Erection of a single storey extension with room in the roof to replace existing 'reception wing', replacement roof with dormers to link extension and other associated internal alterations to main house in connection with the reconfiguration of the dwelling, together with the erection of 2-bay detached garage with storage space in roof slope.

Y14/1001/SH - Ivy Cottage Wingmore Canterbury Kent CT4 6LS - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey extension with room in the roof to replace existing 'reception wing', replacement roof with dormers to link extension and removal of internal walls to existing kitchen.

Y14/1061/SH - New Pound Farm House The Street Newington Folkestone Kent - Felling of six Conifer trees situated within a conservation area

Y14/1040/SH - Endeavour Sussex Road New Romney Kent TN28 8HL - 3 metre overall crown reduction of two Holm Oak trees situated within a conservation area

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

† - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/.

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

Folkestone
Hythe & Romney Marsh
Shepway District Council

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13(3) OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION ACCOMPANIED BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Proposed development at **Land 1085 Metres South West Lydd Model Flying Club Site, Midley Wall, Old Romney, Kent**

I give notice that **Airvolution Energy Limited is applying to Shepway District Council for planning permission for a wind energy development comprising the erection of four wind turbines, each with a maximum height to blade tip of 126.5 metres together with a substation and control building, associated hardstandings, an improved access junction, connecting internal access tracks and water crossings and other related infrastructure**, being accompanied by an updated Environmental Statement.

Members of the public may inspect copies of:

- The application (reference **Y13/0048/SH**)
- The plans
- The environmental statement
- Other documents submitted with the application

A copy of the application including the plans and Environmental Statement may be inspected:

- Online at http://www.shepway.gov.uk/content/view/200376/203/.
- Online by prior appointment at the Civic Centre, Folkestone, 8.30 am - 5.00 pm weekdays, except Wednesday 9.30 am – 5.00 pm. Please ring 01303 853538 to book an appointment
- Online at the One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney – Tuesdays and Fridays 9 am – 12.30 pm.

Members of the Public may also obtain copies of the Environmental Statement from **Ref: Ave, Planning, Savills, Wessex House, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1BN at a charge of £250 for a paper copy or £5 for a CD version.**

Anyone who wishes to make representation can do so in writing to the Council at the Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or by e-mail to planning@shepway.gov.uk ensuring you include your full postal address and quoting the application number within a period of 21 days commencing on the date of publication of the notice.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

STOPPING UP OF LAND AT LAND AT WESTGATE HOUSE PARKING AREA, SPITAL STREET, DARTFORD

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Dartford Magistrates' Court on 6 November 2014 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Land at Westgate House Parking Area, Spital Street, Dartford as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Joy Ukadike by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email joy.ukadike@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 01622 696266 before 29 October 2014 quoting reference number LS/21/106111/657.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Joy Ukadike using the contact details shown above.

JOHN BURR
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Schemes & Member
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003:

Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Zeus Canterbury Ltd has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities:

Sale of Alcohol and Performance of Dance between 10:00 and 23:00hrs every day at the following premises: Zeus', 2-3 Orange Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2JA.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 22/10/2014. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

SUBZERO (2003) LIMITED trading as SUBZERO of Unit 3, Mill Farm, Hunton Road, Marden, Kent TN12 9QX **is applying to change an existing license as follows:**

To add an Operating Centre to keep 7 vehicles and 3 trailers at Norish Ltd., Bailey Drive, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0PZ

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be effected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at:
Hillcrest House,
386 Harehills Lane
Leeds
LS9 6NF
stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

EASTWAY TRANSPORT LTD trading as EASTWAY TRANSPORT LTD of 3 Wharf Road, Denton Wharf, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2RU is applying to change an existing license as follows

To keep an extra 7 goods vehicles and 7 trailers at the operating centre at 3 Wharf Road, Denton Wharf, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2RU

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

To place your notice here, call the Kent Public Notice team on

01233 653465

or email: **jerry.barrett@archant.co.uk**

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Email: vacancies@valence.kent.sch.uk; www.valenceschool.com

STUDENT SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

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Student Support Assistants are responsible for enabling students to learn, promoting their independence and helping them achieve. Valence is looking for committed Student Support Assistants. The job is carried out in classrooms and in the residential setting and involves supporting students' communication, providing physical management and personal care. Successful applicants will have a relevant Level 3 qualification or be supported to complete the Children's Workforce Diploma at Level 3.

Kent Scheme Band 3 (pro-rata)
£14,963 - £16,468 full time equivalent (£7.76 - £8.54 per hour) plus career average pension

WAKING NIGHT STUDENT SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

(Weekdays and Open Weekends)
Part Time hours, Term Time Only, Initially one year fixed term contract.
Shifts are 7.30pm-7.30am or 8pm-8am during the week and 9pm-9am on the 16 open weekends.

The weekends are during Term Time in which the School is open to give respite to families.
This post involves working waking nights, and supporting students with their personal care needs over the night.
Nights available may change. Successful applicants will be expected to complete the Children's Workforce Diploma at Level 3.

Kent Scheme Band 3 (pro-rata)
£14,963 full time equivalent (£7.76 per hour) plus unsocial hours allowance and career average pension

Valence School is a Kent County Council foundation all age residential and day school for children and young people with physical disabilities, complex medical needs and associated learning and communication difficulties.

Valence School is a supportive environment and a rewarding place to work. Every member of staff participates in enabling the students to learn and to aspire to achieve meaningful independence.

Valence School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every student. We expect all staff to share our commitment. The successful applicants will require an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service Check and references will be taken up before interview.

To request an application form please contact the HR Department
vacancies@valence.kent.sch.uk

Previous applicants need not apply.

Please note the closing date for applications is Wednesday 8 October 2014

Interviews: Tuesday 21 October 2014

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Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following position

Business Office Administrator – Dover

Full time - Hours: 37.5 per week - Closing date: 05/10/2014

Salary: £16,473.37 pro rata per annum

Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE A*-C or equivalent
- 2 years' experience working within an Administrative environment
- Good IT Skills
- Excellent Customer Service skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Paul Parish, Business Office Supervisor, on 01304 245955

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Emily Fraser, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 245951 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer.
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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The New School at West Heath is a Specialist Independent School catering for a diverse range of needs for boys and girls age 11 – 19, many of whom have emotional and social communication difficulties. Prior to coming to us, some of our students will have been excluded from mainstream education for a period of time. Here they find a strong therapeutic approach to learning. The School has approval status from the Department for Children, School and families and has an excellent rapport with both parents and Local Authorises. The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We are proud to be an "Outstanding School" (Ofsted 2013)

Due to an internal promotion we have the following vacancy

LEARNING DIRECTOR KS4

Salary Scale L12 – L14

The Learning Director will be responsible for developing and managing a comprehensive and flexible range of services to meet the curriculum and other needs of our students, whilst ensuring the Key Stage is operated in an efficient and effective manner.

Application form and job description can be found on **www.westheathschool.com** or contact **Lynne McGrath** on:-

Email: **lynne.mcgrath@westheathschool.com** Tel: **01732 460 553**

Interviews will be held before half term

The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check

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Administrative Assistant
– Part time 12 hours per week

Salary £14,880 – 15,882 pro rata

The successful applicant will be educated to GCSE level or equivalent, a good communicator, familiar with social media and a committed team player, with recent practical experience. A sound working knowledge of Microsoft Office is essential, as is a proactive and 'can do' positive attitude.

For an application form please contact **Tina Wiles, Town Clerk** on **01303 893928** or **Clerk@hawkingepc.org.uk**

Closing date for completed applications is **Friday 17th October 2014.**

Interviews will be held shortly after the closing date.

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Pictures: DAVID TREVALLION

ALL SMILES... BUT NOT FOR LONG: Anthony Leone, main picture, celebrates scoring against Streatham Redskins on Saturday but his joy was short-lived as defeat to Chelmsford was to follow

Mixed bag for Dynamos as loss takes gloss off previous day's 12-goal fest

Huge home win puts Mos on a high but crushing 5-1 double-header loss leaves Parrish with much to ponder

INVICTA Dynamos got their weekend off to a great start with a 12-4 crushing of Streatham Redskins on Saturday, but rounded it off with their first NIHL defeat of the season the following day.

Sunday's loss away to Chelmsford Chieftains saw Greg Chambers net his first goal for Dynamos, but that was as good as it got for the team from Gillingham, who were thrashed 5-1 in a match which doubled as an English Challenge Cup tie. The Chambers goal came following good work from Callum Fowler and Andy Smith but with Dynamos already five down.

It was perhaps the classic consolation but enough to ensure the scorer the Mos' man-of-the-match accolade.

Emotions had been very different at Silver Blades, Gillingham, the previous evening when four goals from Anthony Leone, three from Juraj Huska, two each from Steve Osman and Callum Fowler and a single from Nicky Lewis saw them demolish Streatham in the NIHL Southern Cup.

The commanding win was all the more impressive given that they had failed to beat the visitors in their last three encounters.

It was the perfect start to the NHL Southern Cup campaign and made possible by a superb showing from the second line, with Osman and Leone both tallying six points and Huska 10.

Dynamos' man of the match, unsurprisingly, was four-goal star Leone.

The defeat against Chelmsford will count towards both Mos' league and English Challenge Cup campaign.

Despite the disappointment, head coach Kevin Parrish will now move his focus to the upcoming weekend when both Billy and Charlie Phillips return from suspension to give him a full roster for the first time in 2014/15.

ROAD AHEAD: Formula Renault driver Raoul Owens achieved a Top 10 place in championship's final standings

Europe or America beckons as young driver vows to improve on a season of highs and lows

PEMBURY racer Raoul Owens wrapped up his second season in the Formula Renault 2.0 Northern European Cup inside the coveted championship Top 10 at the Nürburgring on Sunday.

This was despite the final race of the campaign being cancelled due to fog.

On a weekend that didn't quite deliver the results the 20-year-old was hoping for, especially off the back of a career-best second place last time out in the Czech Republic, Owens posted 12th- and 14th-place finishes in the two Nürburgring contests that did go ahead.

The Bright Spark Ventures-backed racer is now focusing on the next chapter in his single-seater career, with options in Europe and America under consideration.

"After the result at Most we all had a boost and the aim was to try and get a top 10 championship finish – considering everything this year, it's a good result", said Owens.

"I'm not as happy as I could be as if the season had gone our way I think we could have been top five – we definitely had the pace to achieve that.

"All in all, though, it's not too bad and now we're looking ahead to next year.

"The season has been a bit all over the place, but I've learnt a lot and we'll take everything we can from this year into whatever we do next season.

"There have been a lot of problems out of our control, but we've still come through in the championship top 10, which is very important. I've definitely learnt a lot during my time in [Formula] Renault and I have enjoyed it."

Owens's 10th position was secured with 125 points.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Dave Mairs** on **01233 653479**

Kent throw away excellent start and collapse to defeat

KENT'S season came to a poor end on Friday when they capitulated to Gloucestershire in their LV= County Championship Division Two match at Canterbury.

It had all started so well for Kent, who had their visitors struggling on 62-8 at lunch on the first day. However, they again showed an inability to press home their advantage, allowing Gloucestershire to reach 179.

Kent then performed in a sorry fashion with the bat to be bowled out for 164, Sam Billings top-scoring with 73.

Gloucestershire went on to amass 432 in their second innings, David Griffiths the one bright note for Kent as he took a healthy 6-63.

Facing a big target for victory, Kent subsided to 203 all out and a 244-run defeat. This was no way to end the summer...

SIXER: David Griffiths

CHEERED: Manager Peter Taylor

Taylor backs development league move

GILLINGHAM'S decision to enter a team into a 2014-15 development league has been welcomed by manager Peter Taylor.

He says the move should ensure regular football for squad members and be hugely beneficial to them.

He told the club website: "I think sometimes if you haven't got a regular fixture then the players who are in your squad and on the fringes lose important fitness.

"To have a plan there where you are guaranteed a dozen matches or more, plus cup games, that has to be a good thing.

"It's taken very seriously and some of the matches are played at the main stadium."

Tricky Treddy is off to Sri Lanka

JAMES Tredwell has been selected for England's 16-man squad to tour Sri Lanka this winter.

The Kent spinner, known as 'Tricky Treddy' to his colleagues, will be joining the party departing on Sunday, November 16, for a seven-match One-Day International series.

Tredwell's Kent team-mates Sam Billings and Adam Riley have been included in the England Performance Programme (EPP) squad this winter.

The 23-year-old wicketkeeper from Pembury and the 22-year-old Sidcup spinner are included in a 19-player squad at the National Cricket Performance Centre at Loughborough University in October.

Kent head coach Jimmy Adams said: "The lads have worked hard – they deserve their opportunity and I am sure they will make the most of it."

More than 2,300 see Margate win

AN astonishing crowd of 2,306 watched Margate beat Maidstone United 1-0 in Tuesday's Ryman Premier top-of-the table clash.

Ryan Moss's ninth goal of the season six minutes after the break won the match for Margate, who now trail Maidstone by two points but have a game in hand.

Nine players agree contract extensions

KENT have agreed contract extensions with nine squad members.

Adam Ball, Sam Billings, Daniel Bell-Drummond, Alex Blake, Charlie Hartley, Matt Hunn, Imran Qayyum, Adam Riley and Darren Stevens have all signed deals keeping them at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence.

Academy scholars Ryan Davies and Sam Weller join the squad.

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